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*Edition de Luxe*

The Life and Works  
of  
Alfred Lord Tennyson

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

VOLUME III







Water colour 1870

*Farringford*  
*from a water colour drawing*  
*by Mrs. Allingham*





# Alfred Lord Tennyson

## A Memoir

By HIS SON

I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure !

VOLUME III

LONDON  
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
1898

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*This Edition consists of Ten Hundred and Fifty Copies*

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# CHAPTER I

## THE "ENOCH ARDEN" VOLUME, WITH NOTES BY MY FATHER

Spedding, the calm philosopher, glowed with delight, and said "Enoch Arden" was the finest story he had ever heard,<sup>1</sup> and was more especially adapted for Alfred than for any other poet.

*Letter from Thomas Woolner to Mrs. Tennyson.*

1864

My father was always an enthusiast for Italian freedom. Hence the great event of the year at Farringford was Garibaldi's visit. My mother wrote in April :

We went to the Seelys of Brooke to pay our respects to Garibaldi. A most striking figure in his picturesque white poncho lined with red, his embroidered red shirt and coloured tie over it. His face very noble, powerful, and sweet, his forehead high and square. Altogether he looked one of the great men of our Elizabethan age. His manner was simple and kind.

<sup>1</sup> Adelaide Procter wrote a poem on a similar subject, but this my father did not know until after "Enoch Arden" had been published.

A. and I went out to fix a spot in our garden where the *Wellingtonia* should be planted by him (given to A. by the Duchess of Sutherland, and raised by her from a cone that had been shot from a tree three hundred feet high in California). Poor Philip Worsley's<sup>1</sup> poems had just arrived—the thought of him, dying of consumption in the lodging near the bay, mingled strangely with the feeling of this moment and the sounds of welcome as Garibaldi passed thro' the village to Farringford. People on foot and on horse-back and in carriages had waited at our gate two hours for him. Some rushed forward to shake hands with him. He stood up and bowed. A. and I and the boys were in the portico awaiting his arrival. On entering the house Garibaldi admired the primroses with which the rooms were decked, and liked the view of our park, and said to A., “I wish I had your trees in Caprera.” A. and he went up to A.'s study together, and they talked on politics, A. advising the General not to talk politics in England. They repeated Italian poetry to each other.

He told A. that he “could never doubt his country—that he loved her.” “*She* never alters!” he said. “Next to God I never cease to have faith in *her*.” We introduced Garibaldi to Mr. Henry Taylor<sup>2</sup> and to

<sup>1</sup> The author of the well-known translation of the *Odyssey*.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Taylor wrote of Garibaldi's visit to Farringford :

“And there was he, that gentle hero, who,  
By virtue and the strength of his right arm,  
Dethroned an unjust king, and then withdrew  
To tend his farm.

To whom came forth a mighty man of song,  
Whose deep-mouth'd music rolls thro' all the land,  
Voices of many rivers, rich or strong,  
Or sweet or grand.”

other friends. It was pleasant to see how his face lighted up when he recognized his old acquaintance Mrs. Franklin (wife of Colonel Franklin stationed here) : and he greeted the Colonel warmly too. Mrs. Cameron wanted to photograph Garibaldi, and dropped down on her knees before him, and held up her black hands, covered with chemicals. He evidently thought that she was a beggar until we had explained who she was.

Then we went to plant the Wellingtonia. A. had the large screen put up to protect Garibaldi from the cold east wind. Several strangers were there, and when the tree was planted they gave a shout. On going away Garibaldi shook hands with all and kissed the boys. A. was charmed with his simplicity, but thought that in worldly matters he seemed to have the "divine stupidity of a hero." A. also saw Mazzini, and was struck with his keen intellectual face, and quoted with approval what he had said, "Nothing in this world is so contemptible as a literary coterie."

My father wrote then to the Duke of Argyll :

MY DEAR DUKE,

Did you hear Garibaldi repeat any Italian poetry ? I did, for I had heard that he himself had made songs and hymns : and I asked him, "Are you a poet ?" "Yes," he said quite simply, whereupon I spouted to him a bit of Manzoni's great ode, that which Gladstone translated. I don't know whether he relished it, but he began immediately to speak of Ugo Foscolo and quoted, with great fervour, a fragment of his "I Sepolcri," beginning with "Il

navigante che veleggio,” etc. and ending with “ Delle Parche il canto,” which verses he afterwards wrote out for me : and they certainly seem to be fine, whatever the rest of the poem may be. I have not yet read it but mean to do so, for he sent me Foscolo’s *Poesie* from London ; and in return I sent him the “ Idylls of the King,” which I do not suppose he will care for. What a noble human being ! I expected to see a hero and I was not disappointed. One cannot exactly say of him what Chaucer says of the ideal knight, “ As meke he was of port as is a maid ” ; he is more majestic than meek, and his manners have a certain divine simplicity in them, such as I have never witnessed in a native of these islands, among men at least, and they are gentler than those of most young maidens whom I know. He came here and smoked his cigar in my little room and we had a half hour’s talk in English, tho’ I doubt whether he understood me perfectly, and his meaning was often obscure to me. I ventured to give him a little advice : he denied that he came with any political purpose to England, merely to thank the English for their kindness to him, and the interest they had taken in himself and all Italian matters, and also to consult Ferguson about his leg. Stretching this out he said, “ There’s a campaign in me yet.” When I asked if he returned thro’ France he said he would never set foot on the soil of France again. I happened

to make use of this expression, "That fatal debt of gratitude owed by Italy to Napoleon." "Gratitude," he said; "Hasn't he had his pay? his reward? If Napoleon were dead I should be glad, and if I were dead he would be glad." These are slight chroniclings, but I thought you would like to have them. He seemed especially taken with my two little boys.

As to "sea-blue birds" etc. defendant states that he was walking one day in March by a deep-banked brook, and under the leafless bushes he saw the kingfisher flitting or fleeting underneath him, and there came into his head a fragment of an old Greek lyric poet, "*ἀλιπόρφυρος εἶαρος ὄρνις*," "The sea-purple or sea-shining bird of Spring," spoken of as the halcyon. Defendant cannot say whether the Greek halcyon be the same as the British kingfisher, but as he never saw the kingfisher on this particular brook before March, he concludes that in that country at least, they go down to the sea during the hard weather and come up again with the Spring, for what says old Belon :

"Le Martinet-pescheur fait sa demeure  
En temps d'hiver au bord de l'océan,  
Et en esté sur la rivière en estan,  
Et de poisson se repaist à toute heure."

You see he puts "esté," which I suppose stands for all the warmer weather. Was not the last letter in *The Field* written by yourself?



Ever, my dear Duke, with all kind things  
from myself and wife to the Duchess,  
Yours, A. TENNYSON.

We are sorry not to have seen you at Farringford in the time of flowers ; let us know when you can come. I hope the Queen is well and able to enjoy this fine weather.

Just before the publication of “Enoch Arden” we made a pilgrimage into Brittany, where we unearthed many wild “Enoch Arden” stories and ballads. The Breton sailors are fine, simple, religious fellows, many of whom join the Iceland fishery and the French navy. My mother wrote :

There are many pleasant things in our pleasant journey to think of, not the least those weird stones.<sup>1</sup> Carnac owes much less to them than we expected : the Morbihan district interested us much more. Mont St. Michel, the old churches, and the Bayeux tapestry, to say nothing of our drives about the country, were very interesting too. From Quimper to Morlaix is wild Wales in miniature. We did not see as much as we ought to have done of the Western and Northern coasts. We drove by a road near the coast, not on the coast, having foolishly omitted to get a good map in Paris, and not having been able to find one afterwards. The people we found very uncommunicative, and, as far as we could discover, totally ignorant of the past history of their country, and of the Arthur legends. We went to Lannion on purpose to see Keldthuen (where Arthur is said to have held his court) and Avalon : but

<sup>1</sup> The dolmens and cromlechs.

Keldthuen we found a moated and not ancient chateau, and tho' our driver showed us Avalon, the sailors declared it was not Avalon.

Nevertheless the hostess of the Hôtel de l'Europe at Lannion somehow discovered who my father was, and proclaimed everywhere that he was the poet of "notre grand roi Arthur."

The joy of my father in heroism, whether of a past age or of the present, and his delight in celebrating it, are more than ever apparent throughout this volume of 1864. He was especially happy when writing of his "Old Fisherman." In these "Idylls of the Hearth"<sup>1</sup> he had worked at the same vein which he opened in his 1842 poems.—Here he writes with as intimate a knowledge, but with greater power, on subjects from English life, the sailor, the farmer, the parson, the city lawyer, the squire, the country maiden, and the old woman who dreams of her past life in a restful old age.

He said that, excepting the poems suggested by the simple, old-world classical subjects, he had mostly drawn his scenes in England, because he could not truly pourtray the atmosphere of foreign lands. He added that he thought *Romola* a mistake; because George Eliot had not been able to enter into the complex Italian life and character, however much she might have studied them in books.

<sup>1</sup> The first title in the proof-sheets of the "Enoch Arden" volume.

Sixty thousand copies of “Enoch Arden” were sold in a very short time, and after this he was not infrequently called “The Poet of the People,” a title which could not but be appreciated by one who wrote :

Plowmen, shepherds have I found, and more  
than once, and still could find,  
Sons of God and kings of men in utter noble-  
ness of mind.

Indeed, judging by the countless letters from all conditions of men all over the world, and from the many translations into foreign languages, this volume—which contained, besides “Enoch Arden,” “Aylmer’s Field,” “The Grandmother,” “Sea Dreams,” “The Northern Farmer,” “Tithonus,” “The Sailor Boy,” “The Flower,” the “Welcome to Alexandra” and the “Dedication”—is, perhaps with the exception of “In Memoriam,” the most popular of his works.

“I can always write when I see my subject whole,” he said ; but he was fastidious in his choice of subjects, which were selected according to his mood. It took him only about a fortnight to write “Enoch Arden,” within a little summer-house in the meadow called Maiden’s Croft, looking over Freshwater Bay and toward the downs. In this meadow he paced up and down, making his lines ; and then wrote them in his MS. book on the table of the summer-house, which he himself had designed and painted.

He loved the sea as much as any sailor, and knew all its moods whether on the shore or in mid-ocean. He loved it for its own sake and also because English heroism has ever been conspicuous on ship-board: he felt in himself the spirit of the old Norsemen. This delight in the sea more especially comes out in such poems as "Enoch Arden," "Ulysses," "The Revenge," "The Voyage," "The Sailor Boy," "Sea Dreams," "Maud," "Break, break," and "Crossing the Bar," and I remember well his glory in having made these lines in "Boadicea"—

Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of  
silvery parapets !

Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the  
deeds to be celebrated,

Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and  
shadow illimitable ;

and,

Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom  
and blanch on the precipices.

His MS. notes written for me on "Enoch Arden" are as follows: "'Enoch Arden' (like 'Aylmer's Field') is founded on a theme given me by the sculptor Woolner. I believe that this particular story came out of Suffolk, but something like the same story is told in Brittany and elsewhere."

Englishmen living in the tropics often assured him that, in his description of the isle, the splendours of those regions were faithfully depicted ; also the sense of weariness which weighs upon an Englishman doomed to live long among them. On the lines which follow—

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,  
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells,

he wrote : “ Mr. Kinglake told me that he had heard his own parish bells in the desert on a Sunday morning when they would have been ringing at home : and added, ‘ I might have had a singing in my ears, and the imaginative memory did the rest.’ ”

About the line

There came so loud a calling of the sea,

he observed : “ The calling of the sea is a term used, I believe, chiefly in the Western parts of England, to signify a ground swell. When this occurs on a windless night, the echo of it rings thro' the timbers of the old houses in a haven.”

His similes in “ Enoch Arden,” he said, were all such as might have been used by simple fisher-folk, quoting this as one of the tenderest (he thought) he had written :

She heard,  
Heard, and not heard him ; as the village girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,  
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,  
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

Among many stories as to the effect of "Enoch Arden" on the uneducated, I will quote one.

A district visitor was distributing tracts among a large meeting of some poor folk to whom she had lately read part of "Enoch Arden." "Thank you, ma'am," one old lady said, "but I'd give all I had for that other beautiful tract which you read t'other day (a sentiment which was echoed by the others), it did me a power of good." This pleased him; he "was glad to have done any good to any one."

The opening lines of "Aylmer's Field" unfold the moral of that poem. The sequel describes the Nemesis which fell upon Sir Aylmer Aylmer in his pride of wealth. My father always felt a prophet's righteous wrath against this form of selfishness; and no one can read his terrible denunciations of such pride trampling on a holy human love, without being aware that the poet's heart burnt within him while at work on this tale of wrong.

He notes that "Tithonus" had been begun years ago, at the same date that "Ulysses" was written, and that Professor Jebb's translation of the poem into Latin hexameters was a work of real genius.

About the “Northern Farmers,” old and new style, my father writes: “Roden Noel calls these two poems ‘photographs,’ but they are imaginative. The first is founded on the dying words of a farm-bailiff, as reported to me by a great uncle of mine when verging upon 80,—‘God A’mighty little knows what He’s about, a-taking me. An’ Squire will be so mad an’ all.’ I conjectured the man from that one saying.”

“The ‘Farmer, new style’ [in ‘The Holy Grail’ volume], is likewise founded on a single sentence, ‘When I canters my ’erse along the ramper [highway] I ’ears proputtty, proputtty, proputtty.’ I had been told that a rich farmer in our neighbourhood was in the habit of saying this. I never saw the man and know no more of him. It was also reported of the wife of this worthy that, when she entered the *salle à manger* of a sea bathing-place, she slapt her pockets and said, ‘When I married I brought him £5000 on each shoulder.’”

My father was fond of telling stories of this kind in Lincolnshire dialect. The three following are examples:

A housemaid, who was born in the fen country, and accustomed to drink the strong fen water, went to Caistor on the Wolds, famous for its splendid springs. However, she soon gave warning for this reason—“She liked Caistor, but could not abear the watter, for that taasted

o' nowt [nothing]." Another story was of a Lincolnshire farmer coming home on Sunday after a sermon about the endless fires of hell and talking to his wife—"Noä, Sally, it woän't do, noä constitootion cud stan' it." A third was of a Lincolnshire minister praying for rain: "O God, send us rain, and especially on John Stubbs' field in the middle marsh, and if Thou doest not know it, it has a big thorn-tree in the middle of it."

The Lincolnshire dialect poems are so true in dialect and feeling, that when they were first read in that county a farmer's daughter exclaimed: "That's Lincoln labourers' talk, and I thought Mr. Tennyson was a gentleman."

"The Flower,"<sup>1</sup> one of the shorter poems in this volume, is described in the manuscript notes as "an universal apologue." On the subject he quoted: "In this world there

<sup>1</sup> *To J. B. Selkirk*

FRESHWATER, I.W.

DEAR SIR,

Accept my best thanks for your volume of Essays, one of which I had read before, in the *Cornhill* I think. The world, and especially the schools of our younger poets, would be none the worse for lending you an attentive ear. I may remark that you have fallen into a not uncommon error with respect to my little fable "The Flower," as if "I" in the poem meant A. T. and "the flower" my own verses. And so you have narrowed into personality an universal apologue and parable. I once had a letter from a stranger asking whether Christianity were not intended by it. You see by this that I have more than dipt into your book.

Pray believe me yours in all sincerity,

A. TENNYSON.



are few voices and many echoes.” A friend writes :

However absorbed Tennyson might be in earnest talk, his eye and ear were always alive to the natural objects around him. I have often known him stop short in a sentence to listen to a blackbird’s song, to watch the sunlight glint on a butterfly’s wing, or to examine a field flower at his feet. The lines on “ The Flower ” were the result of an investigation of the “ love-in-idleness ” growing at Farringford—he made them nearly all on the spot and said them to me (as they are) next day. Trees and plants had a special attraction for him and he longed to the last to see the vegetation of the Tropics.<sup>1</sup>

Among the experiments in classical quantity,<sup>2</sup> the Alcaic “ Ode to Milton ” was annotated thus : “ My Alcaics are not intended for Horatian Alcaics, nor are Horace’s Alcaics the Greek Alcaics, nor are his Sapphics, which are vastly inferior to Sappho’s, the Greek Sapphics. The Horatian Alcaic is perhaps the stateliest metre in the world except the Virgilian hexameter at its best ; but the Greek Alcaic, if we may judge from the two or three specimens left, had a much freer and lighter movement : and I have no doubt that an old Greek if he knew our language would admit my Alcaics as legitimate, only Milton must not be pronounced Milt’n.”

His hexameters directed against the trans-

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Richard Ward.

<sup>2</sup> First published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, December, 1863.

lation of Homer into accentual English hexameters are well known. German hexameters he disliked even more than English. He once said—"“ Was die Neugier nicht thut’: What a beginning of an hexameter !” and “ What a line ‘Hab’ ich den Markt und die Strassen doch nie so einsam gesehen !””

Indeed he thought that even quantitative English hexameters were as a rule only fit for comic subjects,<sup>1</sup> “tho’ of course you might go on with perfect hexameters of the following kind, but they would grow monotonous :

High woods roaring above me, dark leaves  
falling about me.”

I remember a comic end of an Alcaic in quantity, which he made at this time :

Thine early rising well repaid thee,  
Munificently rewarded artist.

The well-known unquantitative couplet by Coleridge he altered into

Up springs hexameter with might, as a fountain  
arising,  
Lightly the fountain falls, lightly the pentameter.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the hexameters in my “Jack and the Beanstalk,” and some of those in my “Bluebeard” (Mrs. Thackeray Ritchie’s *Bluebeard’s Keys*), were made by him. Throughout these hexameters by his advice quantity, except here and there for the sake of variety, coincides with accent. “Twice,” my father would say, “in the first two lines of the first *Aeneid*, and elsewhere perpetually, quantity is contradicted by accent.”

I have heard him say, “ Englishmen *will* spoil English verses by scanning when they are reading, and they confound accent and quantity.”<sup>1</sup>

Virgil’s finest hexameters, he thought, occurred in the *Georgics*, and in that noble sixth book of the *Æneid*: for instance for descriptive beauty and fine sound he would quote :

“ Fluctus ut, in medio cœpit quum albescere ponto,  
Longius, ex altoque sinum trahit ; utque volutus  
Ad terras, immane sonat per saxa, neque ipso  
Monte minor procumbit : at ima exæstuat unda  
Vorticibus, nigramque alte subjectat arenam ” ;

and,

“ Romanos rerum dominos gentemque togatam ” ;

and,

“ Demens ! qui nimbos et non imitabile fulmen  
Ære et cornipedum pulsu simularet equorum.”

The single Homeric hexameters that he was fondest of quoting for examples of sounding lines, were

“ ἐξ ἀκαλαρρείταιο βαθυρρόου ὠκεανοῖο,”

and

“ βῆ δ’ ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης.”

<sup>1</sup> As an illustration of a quantitative line regardless of accent he suggested the following pentameter :

All men alike hate slops, particularly gruel.

"These are," he would say, "grander in our modern broad Northern pronunciation than in the soft Southern talk of the Greeks, with a difference as between the roar of the Northern sea and the hissing of the Mediterranean."

I need not dwell on my father's love of the perfection of classical literary art, on his sympathy with the temper of the old world,<sup>1</sup> on his love of the old metres, and on his views as to how the classical subject ought to be treated in English poetry.

He purposely chose those classical subjects from mythology and legend, which had been before but imperfectly treated, or of which the stories were slight, so that he might have free scope for his imagination, "The Lotos-Eaters," "Ulysses," "Tithonus," "Ænone," "The Death of Ænone," "Tiresias," "Demeter and Persephone," "Lucretius." A modern feeling was to some extent introduced into the themes, but they were dealt with according to the canons of antique art. The blank verse was often intentionally restrained.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shown especially in such poems as "Lucretius," "Frater ave atque vale," and "To Virgil."

<sup>2</sup> "As a metrist, he is the creator of a new blank verse, different both from the Elizabethan and from the Miltonic. He has known how to modulate it to every theme, and to elicit a music appropriate to each; attuning it in turn to a tender and homely grace, as in 'The Gardener's Daughter'; to the severe and ideal majesty of the antique, as in 'Tithonus'; to meditative thought, as in 'The Ancient Sage,' or 'Akbar's Dream'; to pathetic or tragic tales of contemporary life, as in 'Aylmer's Field,' or 'Enoch Arden'; or

About his blank verse he said something of this kind to me: “The English public think that blank verse is the easiest thing in the world to write, mere prose cut up into five-foot lines; whereas it is one of the most difficult. In a blank verse you can have from three up to eight beats;<sup>1</sup> but, if you vary the beats unusually, your ordinary newspaper critic sets up a howl. The varying of the beats, of the construction of the feet, of the emphasis, of the extra-metrical syllables and of the pauses, helps to make the greatness of blank verse. There are many other things besides, for instance a fine ear for vowel-sounds, and the kicking of the geese out of the boat [*i.e.* doing away with sibilations]; but few

---

to sustained romantic narrative, as in the ‘Idylls.’ No English poet has used blank verse with such flexible variety, or drawn from it so large a compass of tones; nor has any maintained it so equably on a high level of excellence. In lyric metres Tennyson has invented much, and has also shown a rare power of adaptation. Many of his lyric measures are wholly his own; while others have been so treated by him as to make them virtually new.”—*The English Poets*, edited by T. H. Ward, Preface by Professor Jebb.

<sup>1</sup> As an example of rapid blank verse,—where the pauses are light, the accentuated syllables under the average (some even short in quantity) and the narrative is brief and animated,—he would give the passage in “Balin and Balan” from “He rose, descended, met” to “face to ground.” (Examples of blank verse:

With three beats—*And Ba’lin by the bann’eret of his helm’.*

„ four	„	<i>For hate’ and loath’ing would have pass’d’ him by’.</i>
„ five	„	<i>In which’ he scarce’ could spy’ the Christ’ for saints’.</i>
„ six	„	<i>What! wear’ ye still’ the same’ crown’-scan’dalous’?</i>
„ seven	„	<i>The two’-cell’d’ heart’ beat’ing with one’ full’ stroke’.</i>
„ eight	„	<i>Rocks’, caves’, lakes’, fens’, bogs’, dens’, and shades’ of death’.)</i>

educated men really understand the structure of blank verse. I never, if possible, put two 'ss' together in any verse of mine. My line is not, as first misprinted and often misquoted,

And freedom broadens slowly down—  
but

And freedom slowly broadens down.

People sometimes say how 'studiedly alliterative' Tennyson's verse is. Why, when I spout my lines first, they come out so alliteratively that I have sometimes no end of trouble to get rid of the alliteration."

The note by my father, that originally headed his blank verse translation from the *Iliad* beginning

He ceased, and sea-like roar'd the Trojan host,  
ran: "Some, and among these one at least of our best and greatest,<sup>1</sup> have endeavoured to give us the *Iliad* in English hexameters, and by what appears to me their failure have gone far to prove the impossibility of the task. I have long held by our blank verse in this matter, and now after having spoken so disrespectfully here of these hexameters, I venture or rather feel bound

<sup>1</sup> This was written after reading Sir John Herschel's "Book 1. of the *Iliad* translated in the Hexameter Metre," *Cornhill Magazine*, May 1862.

to subjoin a specimen (however brief and with whatever demerits) of a blank verse translation.”

The passages in the *Iliad* which most struck him for their beauty of poetic feeling and diction were those two which he translated into blank verse : and the parting of Paris at the end of the sixth book of the *Iliad*, which he translated *vivâ voce* to me as follows :

“ Nor did Paris linger in his lofty halls, but when he had girt on his gorgeous armour, all of varied bronze, then he rushed thro’ the city, glorying in his airy feet. And as when a stall-kept horse, that is barley-fed at the manger, breaketh his tether, and dasheth thro’ the plain, spurning it, being wont to bathe himself in the fair-running river, rioting, and reareth his head, and his mane flieth back on either shoulder, and he glorieth in his beauty, and his knees bear him at the gallop to the haunts and meadows of the mares ; so ran the son of Priam, Paris, from the height of Pergamus, all in arms, glittering like the sun, laughing for light-heartedness, and his swift feet bare him.”

*Letter from Robert Browning about “ Enoch Arden ”*

19 WARWICK CRESCENT,  
Oct. 13th, 1864.

DEAR TENNYSON,

I have been two months away, and only just find your book now. (It ought to show “ From A. T.”

on the fly-leaf for my son's sake hereafter.) "Enoch" continues the perfect thing I thought it at first reading; but the "Farmer," taking me unawares, astonished me more in this stage of acquaintanceship. How such a poem disproves the statement in that strange mistake of yours, the Flower-apologue! "Steal your seed?" as if they want flower-seed in a gum-flower manufactory! One might cabbage out a tolerable rose, by adroit scissor-work on starched calico, after studying in your gardens of Gul, but the seed for the phenomenon itself comes from a place that was never reached from the top of a wall, you may be sure. "Boadicea," the new metre, is admirable, a paladin's achievement in its way. I am thinking of Roland's Pass in the Pyrenees, where he hollowed a rock that had hitherto blocked the road, by one kick of his boot: so have you made our language undergo you.

Do but go on, and I won't mind adding, may I continue to see and hear you, it is reason enough for being ready to do so.

Good-bye and God bless you! Give my congratulations to Mrs. Tennyson. I looked a long look three days ago at the Hôtel de Douvres where I met her first; and of you I was thinking particularly at Amiens station next afternoon when somebody clapped me on the shoulder, Grant Duff, if you know him.

Ever yours, on the various stations of this life's "line," and, I hope, in the final refreshment-room ere we get each his cab and drive gaily off "Home," where call upon

ROBERT BROWNING.



UNPUBLISHED EPIGRAM OF THIS PERIOD

*Sadness*

*Eternal illimitable darkness is brother to eternal silence*

Immeasurable sadness !  
 And I know it as a poet,  
 And I greet it, and I meet it,  
 Immeasurable sadness !  
 And the voice that apes a nation—  
 Let it cry an affectation,  
 Or a fancy or a madness,—  
 But I know it as a poet,  
 And I meet it, and I greet it,  
 And I say it, and repeat it,  
 Immeasurable sadness !

The Queen having asked for some lines to be inscribed on the Duchess of Kent's statue in the Mausoleum at Frogmore, these were sent :

*Her children rise up and call her blessed.*

Long as the heart beats life within her breast,  
 Thy child will bless thee, guardian mother  
 mild,  
 And far away thy memory will be bless'd  
 By children of the children of thy child.

## CHAPTER II

### MY MOTHER'S JOURNAL AND MY FATHER'S LETTER-DIARIES

*[Throughout Chapters II, III, IV and VI, for the greater clearness of the text, I have printed all extracts from my mother's journal in small print; and my father's diary and letters, as well as my own paragraphs, in large print.]*

1865-1869

*My father's letter-diary. (The death of his mother)*

1865. Feb. 21st. Rosemount, Hampstead. Mother had gone before I came, she went at 10 p.m., age 84.

I dare not see her. I shall have to stop over the funeral. She did not ask for me especially, which is one comfort.

Feb. 25th. Hampstead. I am going to put up at Arthur's. We are all I think *pretty* cheerful. I hope Woolner will make himself quite at home [at Farringford] and have an attic for smoking, for he enjoys his pipe.

Monday, Hampstead. We are going to the funeral to-day. The departure of so blessed a

being, almost whose last words were, when asked how she felt, "very quiet," seems to have no sting in it and she declared that she had no pain. We all of us hate the pompous funeral we have to join in, black plumes, black coaches and nonsense. We should like all to go in white and gold rather, but convention is against us.

[After the funeral.<sup>1</sup>] All has gone off very quietly. A funeral came before us and a funeral followed. I could have wished for the country churchyard.<sup>2</sup>

*My mother's journal.—The Club, "Aylmer's Field,"  
Mesmerism, Winchester, Professor Owen*

The following Preface was written by A. for the "Selection from his Poems" (sold in threepenny numbers), in which were included six new poems, "The Captain," "On a Mourner," "Home they brought him slain with spears," and "Three sonnets to a coquette":

"I have been assured that a selection from my poems would not be unacceptable to the people.

It is true that there are some who cry out against selections, and perhaps not unjustly when these are fragments, but I have inserted nothing here which is not whole in itself, and such as I have been led to believe would be most popular.

Therefore not without the hope that my choice may

<sup>1</sup> A plain cross marks the grave at the entrance to Highgate cemetery.

<sup>2</sup> My mother writes: "All was so painless and peaceful, and she was so much like an angel, there is all the comfort that can be in her end, and in her memory."

be sanctioned by their approval I dedicate this volume to the 'Working Men of England.'"

The Queen sent her thanks for the "Selection from the Poems," expressing her cordial satisfaction on hearing that this "admirable selection from your poems will thus be brought within the reach of the poorest amongst the subjects of Her Majesty."

A. wrote the following letters to the Duke of Argyll about his election to The Club [Dr. Johnson's Club], and with reference to the two lines which ended "Aylmer's Field" in the first edition :

There the thin weasel with faint hunting-cry  
Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

FARRINGFORD,  
Feb. 17th, 1865.

MY DEAR DUKE,

Before answering definitely, I should like to know something about expenses. "The Club"? It is either my fault or my misfortune that I have never heard of it. I suppose one has not to pay some 25 guineas entrance and some 7 ditto a year, because then, I would not say that the game is not worth the candle, but that the candle is too dear for me. Does one only pay for one's dinner when eaten, or how is it?

Ever yours not ungratefully,  
A. TENNYSON.

I have ascertained that weasels *have* a hunting-cry.

## WEASELS

1865

FARRINGFORD,

Feb. 20th, 1865.

MY DEAR DUKE,

Propose me : I agree : yours be the shame if I'm blackballed !!!

### *Weasels*

I have not heard of any weasels crying in the chase after a *mouse*, nor where it is a *solitary* hunter of *anything*. But I am assured by those who have heard them that when they join in the chase after *great* game, such as a rabbit (even tho' there should be no more than two), they not unfrequently utter their faint hunting-cry. I suppose the size of their victim excites them.

I never see *The Field*. Would it be worth while writing thereto on this matter ?

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

### *From the Duke of Argyll*

PRIVY SEAL OFFICE,

March 16th, 1865.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

You were last night unanimously elected a member of "The Club," and you will probably receive by this post the usual formal intimation to that effect from Dean Milman, who was chairman at last night's dinner.

The form of intimation was drawn up as a joke by Gibbon and has been adhered to ever since.<sup>1</sup> You will

<sup>1</sup> "I have to intimate to you that *you have had the honour of being elected a member of 'The Club.'*"

be amused by its terms. The Duc d'Aumale was elected along with you. There were four vacancies and we think we have filled them up to our credit.

1. Poet Laureate. 2. Duc d'Aumale. 3. Froude. 4. Dean Stanley. You will have to send £7 (£5 entrance and £2 for the year's subscription) to the credit of the Club account with,—I forget the banker's name—but I will send it to you.

Ever yours, ARGYLL.

During the end of March and beginning of April the Alexander Grants, Annie Thackeray, Mr. G. F. Watts, Mrs. and Miss Marsden visited us.

About Mrs. Marsden A. recalled how through his mesmerism before her marriage she had recovered her health :—"We were staying at Malvern. Dr. Marsden was attending my wife and said to me, 'Instead of paying me my fee, I wish you would grant me a favour. Come and mesmerize a young lady who is very ill.' I said, 'I can't mesmerize, I never mesmerized any one in my life.' But the doctor would take no refusal and said, 'Pooh! look at your powerful frame!' So I mesmerized her according to the doctor's instructions. The first day it took me about an hour to send her to sleep; afterwards only a few seconds. Once she had a pain over her eye, and the doctor said, 'Breathe upon her eye!' I did so, then begged her pardon, saying that I had forgotten I had been smoking. Dr. Marsden said, 'She cannot hear you, that one breath has sent her off into the deepest of slumbers.' In a little while the lady grew better, and we moved to Cheltenham. A week or two afterwards I returned to Malvern for a few hours, but I had not thought of telling any one that I was coming. I met Dr. Marsden in the street, who at once went and told the lady. Before the doctor had

said more to her than 'I have good news for you,' the lady said, 'I know what you have come to tell me, I have felt Mr. Tennyson here for half an hour.'” This lady eventually married Dr. Marsden.

*May 7th.* Last evening, in answer to a letter from Florence asking for lines on Dante, he made six and sent them off to-day in honour of Dante's six hundredth centenary.

He wrote to Aubrey de Vere about the death of his friend Stephen Spring Rice [father of the present Lord Monteagle] as follows :

FARRINGFORD, *May 15th*, 1865.

MY DEAR AUBREY,

The death of my good friend Stephen has not taken me in any way by surprise. I had even expected to hear of it some weeks ago. Death is, I should hope, to most of us a “deliverance,” and to him especially, suffering as he did continually from these attacks, it must have been a “great” one. I have had such dear and near losses this year, that—I do not say I can on that account sympathise more fully with his wife and children, but I do most fully feel for and with them : and tell them so whenever an opportunity occurs. I hope they are all well, and you also.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

P.S. He was one of the five of his friends I knew before our marriage, and the third (the other two Arthur Hallam and Henry Lushington) who has left us. No new friends can be like the old to him or to any, I suppose, and few of the

old were so dear to him as he. May I too say all that is kind and sympathising? How does his father bear his loss? It seems a long time since we met.

Ever yours, EMILY TENNYSON.

*May 24th.* We started with the boys for their private tutor's, Mr. Paul, at Bailey Gate in Dorsetshire. We visited the Minster at Wimborne on the way. Saw the monument of Margaret Beaufort with her hand in her husband's. A sorrowful sight to us both—our two boys on the Bailey Gate platform, alone for the first time in their lives as our train left.

*June 8th.* We went home by Winchester and slept there, and lunched with the Warburtons. He took us into the Dean's garden to see the fine view of the Cathedral, and the wonderfully clear stream. A. told a story of his driving into Winchester on the coach when a young man, and asking the coachman, "What can you tell me about Winchester?" and his answer, "Debauched, sir, like all cathedral cities." He and Mr. Warburton compared notes, for A. had been reading *Job* in Hebrew, a book in which he had always rejoiced.

*June 12th.* Mrs. Woolner, speaking of a party at Oxford at which A. had been expected, wrote :

Every one was regretting Mr. Tennyson's absence from the party, above the rest Bishop Colenso who had been very desirous to meet him. Indeed he said that your husband was the only man he had wished to see before leaving England, as he thought him the man who was doing more than any other to frame the Church of the future.

*July 23rd.* Farringford. Professor Owen arrived.



A. went with him to Brightstone. They spread out their luncheon on Mr. Foxe's lawn and looked at the great dragon [a Saurian reptile dug up at Brooke] which was new to the Professor, and which quite answered his expectations. He never saw one so sheathed in armour, and thought of calling it *Euacanthus Vectianus*. Most interesting he was. The story of his medical student days, of the negro's head which he had been carrying slipping from under his arm, bounding down the hill and bursting through a window into the midst of a quiet family at tea : their horror : his rushing in after the head without a word, and clutching at it and "bolting," was very ghastly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following is the story given me by Mrs. Hugh Smith :—

"When Professor Owen was a surgeon at Lancaster, he was much interested in ethnology, and, wishing to study the shape of the Ethiopian skull, he obtained permission to look at the body of a negro criminal, who had been hanged in Lancaster Gaol, and now lay there awaiting his burial.

In the dead of a winter's night, armed with a sharp knife and large cloth, both hidden under a cloak, Professor Owen entered the gaol, and alone found his way to the upper story where the negro lay in his coffin. With his sharp knife he soon cut off the head, and for further examination he wrapped it in the cloth he had brought with him and left the gaol.

Lancaster streets are steep, and slope on each side to the houses, whose doors are below the level of the roadway. As Professor Owen walked rapidly along, his foot tripped, down he fell, and his bundle slipped out of his arms. In falling, the cloth opened and the negro's head flew out, and bumped along the ground until it met some obstacle, which caused it to swerve on one side and rapidly descend the sloping roadway. To Professor Owen's anguish he saw the head fly in at an open window of one of the houses.

Knowing that if the story of his having anything to do with such a proceeding, as cutting off a criminal's head, got about, it would ruin his career in Lancaster, he quickly drew his large cloak over his face and shoulders, rushed after the negro's head into the house, threw himself and the cloak upon it, gathered it up, and departed in a moment.

Next day he was sent to visit an old woman who had been

*Tour to Waterloo, Weimar and Dresden*

*Aug. 12th.* Drove through the forest of Soigny to Waterloo. The high pillared beeches delighted A., "making a grand aisle, their leaves dappled with sunlight,—a wonderful fawn-coloured carpet of sward beneath." At one spot they were burning charcoal: there was a clearing in the wood, and the seed of innumerable willow-herbs made a silver mist. At Waterloo we lunched at the top of the Lion Mound, which has spoilt the field. A. and the boys went to Hougoumont, looked at the red wall that the French charged, mistaking it for our redcoats, and saw the famous gateway. They took a bullet out of the wall. We stayed at the Hôtel du Musée, and made a careful tour of the whole field with maps and Siborne's volumes.

Next day we accomplished the circuit of the field, going over the French position. A. was impressed with the "wailing of the wind" at night, as if the dead were lamenting; and with the solemn feeling that all around us were the graves of so many thousand men. We saw the bank behind which our Guards lay when the last French attack was made by the "Old Guards." Sergeant Mundy, who showed us round Hougoumont,

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taken very ill the night before. He found himself in the very house where the adventure of the night before had taken place. She was the widow of a West Indian trader, who had been engaged in very questionable transactions, and was believed to have acted very cruelly to negroes during his career. She was sitting by her fire, thinking over her husband and his past life, when 'all of a sudden in flew a negro's head as if come to reproach her, and then the devil himself appeared in a flash,' and she fell down in a fit!

Professor Owen had to hear all this without daring to reveal himself or tell the story till he was quite an old man."

assured us that the Duke of Wellington did not say "Up, guards, and at them," but merely put his hand to his head and said "Ready." As A. observed, "That is infinitely more like him." One of the old French Imperial Guard visited the place afterwards, and said that it seemed on that day and at that hour as if our men had "risen out of the earth." The sergeant told A. a striking fact, that he sat all night on horse-back in rain and thunder and lightning without anything to eat, not even tasting food till next night, yet so great was the excitement that he neither felt wet nor hunger, but that the whole time seemed to him five minutes.

We spent a week at the Hotel, A. enjoying his study of the battlefield and his long walks.

Thence we went to Luxembourg and Trèves. The last is an enchanting place—the Cathedral, the river, the Porta Nigra, the Basilica and the Palace of Constantine, and the Amphitheatre, where so many thousands of Christians have fought with beasts, or have been bidden to slay each other. A. called the Basilica "The ideal Methodist Chapel"; outside the proportions are grand and simple. There are fine old MSS. in the Museum.

We drove to Mülheim, and rowed down the Moselle in a little boat by Berncastel and Zell to Coblentz. A lovely row between hills of all shapes, sometimes clothed with vines, sometimes with forest.

### *Weimar*

A. disliked Coblentz as much as ever; we left this (going by Eisenach and seeing the Wartburg) for Weimar. The people there seemed to be rather stupid about Goethe and Schiller, and in vain we tried to impress

upon our driver that we wanted to see all which concerned them. Thanks to the kindness of a soldier we got inside the palace, and saw the rooms where Goethe lived so much with the Grand Duke and Duchess. Next morning we secured a commissionaire, who took A. and the boys inside the Fürstengruft, where they saw Goethe's and Schiller's coffins lying with those of the Royal Family. Lionel had a leaf of bay given him for A. from Goethe's coffin. We were very much pleased by the cheerfulness and simplicity of Goethe's gartenhaus, which we visited. Afterwards we drove to Schiller's house, three rooms pleasant enough in spite of their bareness. His wife's guitar lay near his bed; on it a portrait of himself, said to be good, taken soon after death. The "other-world" peace of it struck A. and me. Then we went to the Church to see Lucas van Cranach's altar-piece, so interesting from the portraits of Luther and himself. The portrait of Luther as a monk I liked best. We drove to Tréport, charmingly situated on the Ilm which babbles pleasantly along.

*Sept. 1st.* Went with Mr. Marshall—secretary to the Grand Duchess—to Goethe's town-house. No key there for the rooms. The old woman said that she was alone in the house, and could not possibly go and fetch it. A. was touched by seeing the "Salve" on the door-mat, and all Goethe's old boots at the entrance. Mr. Marshall brought the Herr Direktor, for eight years Goethe's secretary, who courteously left his dinner to come. Mr. Marshall expressed his regret that there was no time to write to Madame von Goethe for an order to see the study. The Director made no remark at the time, but, when he had shown us the busts and gems and statuettes, and Goethe's own drawings, he took us into the sacred study. One cannot explain in words the awe and sadness with which this low dark

room filled A. The study is narrow, and in proportion long. In the middle was a table with a cushion on it where Goethe would lean his arms, and a chair with a cushion where he sometimes sat, but his habit was to pace up and down and dictate to his secretary. On one side of the room was a bookcase about two-thirds up the wall, with boxes for his manuscripts. There were also visiting cards, strung like bills together, and Goethe's old, empty, wine bottles, in which the wine had left patterns like frost patterns. On the other side of the room was a calendar of things that had struck him in newspapers. Here a door opened to his bedroom. Such a melancholy little place! By the bed was an arm chair, to which at last he used to move from his bed for a little change. All round the wall, by the bed and the chair, a dark green leafy carpet or tapestry was fastened half-way up the wall of the room. On the washing-stand was some of the last medicine he took. The one window at the foot of the bed was partly boarded up. It looked I think into the garden.

### *Dresden*

After seeing Goethe's house Mr. Marshall met us at the station, and saw us off for Leipzig. Next day we left Leipzig for Dresden. On our arrival at Dresden we went to the gallery. The Madonna and Child by Raffaele struck A. and me as wonderfully "human and Divine." We seemed to see the trouble of the world in the Virgin's eyes, and the Child made A. "marvel at His majesty." Indeed there is a still majesty in the whole picture. Afterwards A. and the boys visited the Zoological Gardens and A. saw the great aurochs which interested him. Next day to the gallery, to see the Raffaele Madonna again; we also looked at the Holbein

Holy Family, which is very great, Titian's Tribute-money, and Correggio's Magdalene, etc. The day after A. and the boys went to the Green Vaults, and the splendour of the diamonds struck A. much. A German professor suddenly discovered A. and made him a long complimentary speech, which was trying. A. took us to the gallery again, and showed us the Titians, also Correggio's Virgin, La Notte, and the Spanish pictures, and again the two great Madonnas.

*Sept. 6th.* A. and the boys went to the armoury, to the picture-gallery once more, and then to Saxon Switzerland.

*Sept. 7th.* After a very pleasant week at Dresden, we went by train to Brunswick. At night we heard tremendous crashing, as if all the windows in the house were being smashed. We asked what it meant, and were told that to-morrow a very rich young lady was to be married, and that it was the custom on the eve of a marriage to break all sorts of dishes and bottles against the bride's door. Was this the Polternacht for good luck? The houses are quaint. A. and the boys went to the crypt of the church to look at the coffins of the nine Dukes of Brunswick, who all fell in battle.

*Sept. 11th.* Aix-la-Chapelle. A. had been here before. The city looked magical as we swept through the old gates last evening, when the domes and hills stood out gold and blue in the rich sunset.

*Farringford, Queen Emma, G. F. Watts, London*

*Sept. 28th.* Farringford. Queen Emma of the Sandwich Islands arrived, Major Hopkins and a huge native, Mr. Hoapili, in attendance. Aunt Franklin came.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lady Franklin.

The Queen's maid and her luggage lost on the road : they arrived at midnight. We had had a throne chair made out of our Ilex wood. It was first used by the Queen. She, poor lady, wanted to stay quietly here, but she had to go to banquets, etc. about the Island. I collected money for the projected cathedral in Honolulu.

A. went with the Queen up the Down. John Welsh, the Queen's servant, said nothing would induce him to leave her, she was so good. There was a wailing thro' the seven Sandwich Islands for the Queen when she left, because the natives thought she never would return. Endless guests came in to tea. A. took her out that she might read her letters ; and hid her from the guests in the summer-house in the kitchen garden ("among the cabbages" she said). A. and I were pleased with her sweet dignity of manner, and a calmness that made one think of an Egyptian statue ; her voice was musical. Mr. and Mrs. Hoapili sang Hawaiian songs. They sat on the ground and acted the song while they sang. They then chanted an ode to the young Prince, a wild monotonous chant. All great people's children in Hawaii have odes made to them on the day of their birth, a kind of foreshadowing of their lives. When a bard meets the hero of any ode so made he has to sing it to him.

*Oct. 2nd.* A. gave her two large magnolia blossoms on her leaving. She has an affectionate nature ; something very pathetic about her.

*Oct. 6th.* A. read me some Lucretius, and the 1st Epistle of St. Peter. (At work at his new poem of "Lucretius.")

This letter accompanied Robert Browning's own small selection from his poems :

## LETTER TO BROWNING

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, Oct. 10th, 1865.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

When I came back last year from my holiday I found a gift from you, a book ; this time I find only the blue and gold thing which, such as it is, you are to take from me. I could not even put in what I pleased, but I have said all about it in the word or two of preface, as also that I beg leave to stick the bunch in your button-hole. May I beg too that Mrs. Tennyson will kindly remember me?

Ever affectionately yours,  
ROBERT BROWNING.

*To Robert Browning*

FARRINGFORD.

MY DEAR BROWNING,

Very welcome is the nosegay, not only for "the *love* in the gift," which makes me, who am physically the most unbumptious of men and authors, proud : but also for its own very peculiar flowerage and fructification, for which I think I have as high a respect as any man in Britain. I stick it into my button-hole and feel \* \* \* 's cork heels added to my boots.

My wife always remembers you, and another.

I too, when last in Paris, took a long look at the Hôtel de Douvres, thinking of the former time.<sup>1</sup>

Ever yours affectionately,  
A. TENNYSON.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 21.



*Nov. 3rd.* A. and I went to our ploughman, to congratulate him on his having won the first ploughman's prize in the Isle of Wight. All the family radiant with the prize-money. The wife went off with it to buy winter shoes for her husband and the children.

Mr. G. F. Watts, with his accustomed munificence, gave us the pictures that he had made of me and of the boys, and wrote to A. of the boys' picture: "If there had been any correspondence between my will and power, the picture would have been worth acceptance for itself, but I can only hope that it may have some small value as a token of friendship, and an expression of profound admiration and respect."

*Nov. 15th.* Mayall came with the photographs. That of A. very fine.

*My father's letter-diary from London*

Yesterday I called with Woolner on Froude, and then we all walked to Carlyle's. Mrs. C. seemed feeble, but was very glad to see me, then Carlyle walked a mile or two with us, and was agreeable and amusing as usual.

*Dec. 5th.* I called on Queen Emma twice yesterday. Our Queen had been very kind and cordial to Queen Emma, and had given her a rich gold bracelet with a serpent onyx, and a portrait of herself, and a lock of her hair. Queen Emma was off for the Continent this morning at 8 o'clock. The great man Gladstone is coming to dine with me here on Friday; a compliment; but how he can find time from the mighty press of business amazes me. I go over to Palgrave's to-morrow.

*Dec. 6th.* 29 Welbeck Street. I go to Palgrave's to-day, 5 York Gate, Regent's Park. I dined there yesterday and met Joseph Hooker, who told me my tropical island (in "Enoch") was all right; but X—in his illustrations has made it all wrong, putting a herd of antelopes upon it, which never occur in Polynesia.

*Dec. 7th.* York Gate. I am installed here, having come from Woolner's last night, where I dined with Mr. Jenner, who has ordered my bust<sup>1</sup> from W. and who is going to leave it to the National Portrait Gallery; an amiable and reverential man he seems. I called on the Guests yesterday, for Schreiber saw me walking in the Green Park, and shouted to me thro' the rails, as he was riding down the street, and begged me to call. Enid was in and he; Lady Charlotte out. I must go and call on Forster to-day. I saw old Procter yesterday, better than he was, but very feeble.

*Dec. 8th.* York Gate. I was inducted into the Royal Society last night, after dining with W. White, whither Woolner accompanied me. We had a merry dinner with lots of anecdotes; there were very few people, and I went thro' it without nervousness.

*Dec. 9th.* York Gate. Yesterday at Woolner's, Gladstone, Holman Hunt, and Dr. Symonds and his son. Dr. S. is a famous physician at Bristol,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jenner gave this bust to me in 1893 to place in Westminster Abbey.

who had come all the way to dine with Gladstone and myself. I like him much. The great man was infinitely agreeable, and delivered himself very eloquently and freely on Homer, etc. I asked him to speak to Lord Russell about Allingham's little pension, which he promised to do. He spoke too about Jamaica, and seems, tho' he suspends his judgment, to think that Eyre was so terribly in the wrong that he may have to be tried for his life.

After this dinner my father wrote to Gladstone :

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

As you were kind enough to say that you would forward to Lord Russell Mr. Allingham's application for an increase of pension together with my petition that it might be taken into consideration, I send you A.'s letter to myself, wherein he sets forth at full what his claims are, and why he wishes them to be attended to. As I said to you at the time—the man has a true spirit of song in him, I have no doubt of it : and my opinion, I am happy to say, is confirmed by Carlyle in his letter to A. which I only do not forward because, from his letter, it does not appear that I am at liberty so to do. Carlyle also mentions some work of Allingham's (I have not seen it myself—it is possibly some preface to his projected work on Ireland) in these following terms—"Your pleasant and excellent

historical introduction might, if its modesty would permit, boast itself to be the very best ever written perhaps anywhere for such a purpose. I have read it with real entertainment and instruction on my own behoof, and with real satisfaction on yours—so clear, so brief, definite, graphic ; and a fine genially human tone in it.” I think you will agree with me, that this testimonial from one who is a great name in Britain, and who has won his own laurels chiefly in the field of History, does go some way in establishing a case for Allingham. And for myself I really believe that, if he were set free as he says by his pension being raised to the amount required, he might do good to Ireland, and thro’ Ireland to England, by accomplishing a work which under his present circumstances seems all but impossible. I may add that I have known him for years, that he is very industrious, and in his life sober and moral :—his age somewhere between 40 and 50.

Believe me, my dear Mr. Gladstone,

Ever sincerely yours, A. TENNYSON.

*Dec. 12th.* I dine at the Deanery of St. Paul’s to-morrow. Sir John Lubbock has just sent me his *Prehistoric Times*, which I shall find greatly interesting. Dean Milman was very agreeable yesterday. The Stanleys did not come. Browning was here.

*Dec. 13th.* York Gate. The Palgraves go

into the country on Monday and I leave this house, but whether I shall get beyond Winchester the first day is, I should think, doubtful. I don't much care for Lionel's sporting propensities, but then you know man is naturally "a beast of prey."

*Dec. 14th.* Dined at Milman's yesterday. Milman told me that Her Majesty's household do not serve on juries, and if ever I am asked again so to do, to state this, Her Majesty being supposed to be always requiring their services. I called on Tyndall yesterday and had a long chat with him about mind and matter, etc. He is coming to see me to-night at Woolner's where I dine and meet Dr. Woolley the Australian and Froude.

*Dec. 15th.* A great gathering last night at Woolner's. Dr. Woolley seems altogether of the higher class of man.<sup>1</sup> Thompson the Confederate was there and Browning, and innumerable anecdotes were told. To-day I dine here; nobody asked, at my request.

The following note about "The Northern Farmer" arrived from W. G. Clark :

Thompson has been staying at Fryston, where he met a Mr. Creyke, a Yorkshireman, with a talent for recitation. This Mr. Creyke had been staying at a

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Woolley, the Principal of Sydney College, went down in the "London," which was wrecked during a storm in the Bay of Biscay, Jan. 11, 1866.

farmhouse in Holderness, where in the evening the neighbouring farmers used to come and smoke. One evening he repeated "The Northern Farmer." When it was done, one of them said, "Dang it, that caps owt. Now, sur, is that i' print, because if it be I'll buy t' book, cost what it may?" Creyke said, "The book contains things you mayn't like as well, so I'll write it out for you."

This he did : the farmer put it in his breast-pocket ; and next day when out shooting Creyke saw him from time to time taking it out to read.

After this Mr. Tennyson may claim to have rivalled Orpheus.

*Dec. 31st.* "1865-66"<sup>1</sup> was written. The last two lines give the monotony of the storm—the only answer to the question as to what the future will bring forth.

1866

*My mother's journal.*—*London, Marlborough, New Forest, "Song of the Wrens," Governor Eyre*

*London. Feb. 4th.* We found an invitation to luncheon at the Deanery [Westminster]. Mr. Vaughan<sup>2</sup> came in, and we had a delightful talk before luncheon and also at luncheon, when the Carlyles joined us. A. is fond of the Abbey and of strolling about it by himself. "How dreamlike it looks!" he said. We

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *Good Words*, 1868. My father wrote to Mr. Palgrave : "What a season ! The wind is roaring here like thunder, and all my ilexes rolling and whitening. Indeed we have had whole weeks of wind."

<sup>2</sup> Brother-in-law to Dean Stanley, afterwards Dean of Llandaff.

went to see Thackeray's bust. The Dean remarked at luncheon: "Having to do with artists and sculptors about statues and busts of great men gives fresh cause to lament their death."

*Feb. 10th.* Mr. Browning<sup>1</sup> gave me an affectionate greeting after all these years. In the evening the Brookfields joined us, and their daughter Magdalen, with her white, gold-bordered dress, seemed, A. said, "as if she had come out of a fairy-story."

*April 20th.* A. wrote to the Duke of Argyll:

MY DEAR DUKE,

*April 20th, 1866.*

The son's<sup>2</sup> sonnet is I think creditable to him both as regards feeling and execution. I read and grieved to hear of his illness in the *Times*, but he is it seems all right again now. I know nothing of politics here except from the newspapers, but I suppose the [Reform] Bill is looking up, as they say, since I left town, and that you are not going to Switzerland as you threatened.

I see that Mr. Lowe did me the honour of quoting me the other night. If any one on your side wished to make a speech culminate in a quotation which may be a prophecy, he might

<sup>1</sup> Browning writes on Feb. 19th:

I go out a great deal; but have enjoyed nothing so much as a dinner last week with Tennyson, who, with his wife and one son, is staying in town for a few weeks, and she is just what she was, and always will be, very sweet and dear; he seems to me better than ever. I met him at a large party on Saturday, also Carlyle, whom I never met at a "drum" before.

*Life and Letters of Robert Browning*, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Marquis of Lorne.

possibly produce an effect by quoting the last two stanzas of my address to the Queen, in the preface to my poems—

And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the season when, etc.

which really would seem *à propos*.

Ever, my dear Duke, yours,  
A. TENNYSON.

My mother wrote : *May 1st*, 1866. Farringford. To-day I was to have gone with A. to take Hallam to Marlborough,<sup>1</sup> but could not.

### *Marlborough*

"I sent him to Marlborough," said my father, "because Bradley is a friend of mine, and Stanley has told me that it is the best school in England."

*May 2nd.* Marlborough. We drove to Avebury and Silbury, my father suggesting that Silbury was a monument after some great battle. In the evening the Bradleys had a large dinner-party. Some one spoke of *Diplömăcy* and *Prögress*. "Oh!" said my father, "why do you pronounce the word like that? pray give the *ō* long." Then turning to an excellent scholar: "You, so-and-so," he said jokingly, "you never open your mouth without making a grammatical blunder."

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 337, for talk on Milton.



Bradley knowing my father's love of science asked masters interested in geology, botany and archæology to meet him. He conversed with all of them: and praised the organist's (W. S. Bambridge's) settings of "Thou art gone to the grave" and "Lead, kindly light." At the request of Mrs. Bradley he read "The Northern Farmer," and then criticised amusingly some of the boys' Prize Poems which Bradley had begged him to look through. Later in the evening he was talking on death, and quoting a Parisian story of a man having deliberately ordered and eaten a good dinner, and having afterwards committed suicide by covering his face with a chloroformed handkerchief. "That's what I should do," my father said, "if I thought there was no future life."

*May 3rd.* In view of the old cut yews (opposite his window) he began to write his ballad of "The Victim." He expressed great delight at the choir of birds in the trees here. In the afternoon we drove through Savernake Forest, ablaze with golden beeches.

After dinner the Upper Sixth came in, and at their petition he read "Guinevere," refusing however enthronement in a large arm-chair, and asserting it was "too conspicuous."

*May 4th.* My father walked about the garden, finishing "The Victim." He was full of fun, and at luncheon told the following story about Dr. Abernethy:

"A farmer went to the great doctor complaining of discomfort in the head, weight and pain. The doctor said, 'What quantity of ale do you take?' 'Oh, I taaks ma yaale pretty well.' Abernethy (with great patience and gentleness), 'Now then, to begin the day, breakfast. What time?' 'Oh at haafe-past seven.' 'Ale then? How much?' 'I taakes my quart.' 'Luncheon?' 'At 11 o'clock I gets another snack.' 'Ale then?' 'O yees, my pint and a haafe.' 'Dinner?' 'Haafe-past one.' 'Any ale then?' 'Yees, yees, another quart then.' 'Tea?' 'My tea's at haafe-past five.' 'Ale then?' 'Noa, noa.' 'Supper?' 'Noine o'clock.' 'Ale then?' 'Yees, yees. I taakes my fill then. I goes asleep arterwards.' Like a lion aroused Abernethy was up, opened the street door, shoved the farmer out and shouted out, 'Go home, sir, and let me never see your face again: go home, drink your ale and be damned.' The farmer rushed out aghast, Abernethy pursuing him down the street with shouts of 'Go home, sir, and be damned.'"

The Bradley children brought in some wild cherry blossoms, and my father said, "You have ruthlessly picked the future fruit: do you remember Wordsworth's poem about picking strawberry-blossoms?" He never much liked flowers being gathered: he would say he preferred "to see them growing naturally."

In the afternoon we drove to Martinsell and

walked over the mounds, and looked at the relics of the British village.

After dinner my father was again asked to read by Mrs. Bradley: "Will it be too cruel to ask you to read 'The Grandmother'?" "No, I can't read to-night, and I must be in a proper mood for that and I am not." "Oh well, do give us all the pleasure of hearing you read, only choose something else." "How can you ask me when you know I only read to my intimate friends?" "I know you don't, but I know you will read to *our* intimate friends. No others are here to-night." "Well, well, but not 'The Grandmother.'" A Belgian governess, Mlle. Stapps, was on the chair just behind him. He said, "I can't read 'The Grandmother' properly except after breakfast, when I am weak and tremulous; fortified by dinner and a glass of port I am too vigorous." "Well, read 'The Northern Farmer' then." So he did: and asked Mlle. how much she understood. "Pas un mot, Monsieur."

Then he read "The Grandmother," and after that four pieces out of Hood's *Whims and Oddities*, "Faithless Nellie Gray," "Faithless Sally Brown," "Tim Turpin" and "Ben Battle." He explained the play on words in them to Mlle. who was "excessivement enchantée." He laughed till the tears came at some things he read. This went on till 11.50, and then we separated.

*May 5th.* My father returned home, leaving me at school.<sup>1</sup>

*Letters from friends*

*Letter from Rev. J. Waite (my father's schoolmaster at Louth), thanking him for a set of his books*

MANBY RECTORY, near LOUTH,  
*May 8th, 1866.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I return you my best thanks for your immortal works forwarded to me by your bookseller, which I shall not fail to have placed on a shelf in the library of the new Grammar School in Louth with the works of your two elder brothers, as a contribution more precious than gold or silver, being really Aurea Carmina ; in memory of the elementary part of your education received by all of you in that royal institution. Had I been asked in your boyish days which of the three would probably scale the highest summit of Parnassus, I almost fancy I should have awarded the palm to primogeniture, and I am still almost disposed to say "Arcades omnes, Et cantare pares et respondere parati."

The two seniors have been however far distanced in the quantity, if not in the quality of their productions. I am ashamed to confess that I had never before seen all your works ; but they will now form a portion of my daily reading, as an agreeable dessert after my more plain repast of Divinity and my old school books.

Your sincere friend,

J. WAITE (in his 86th year).

<sup>1</sup> This account is mainly taken from Mrs. Bradley's diary.

## MEMORIAL TO KEBLE

1866

*June 9th.* A letter from Mr. Twisleton arrived, asking A. to sign an application for a Memorial to Keble in Westminster Abbey.

3 RUTLAND GATE, LONDON,  
*June 8th, 1866.*

DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

I thank you for your note and I am very glad that you consent to sign the application for a Memorial in Westminster Abbey to Mr. Keble. The application shall be duly forwarded to you for your signature.

I may add that I was acquainted with your friend A. H. Hallam, and that I never met a man whom on a short acquaintance I liked so much. The last time I saw him could not have been long before the fatal event in 1833. I had been at Vienna and had been travelling with my mother in what is called the Austrian Switzerland. On a very fine day we had left Ischl on our way to Salzburg, and just as we were arriving at the brow of the hill whence travellers from Salzburg have the first view of the lake of Ischl I met him in a carriage with his father. We both left our carriages and I had about five minutes' conversation with him, each telling the other what he might expect to see. He was in the highest spirits, expressing himself delighted with the beauty of the country which could be visited from Salzburg, and he seemed to me in the florid health of one embrowned by exercise in the sun. It was only afterwards that it struck me as possible that the supposed signs of health might have been owing to fatal fulness of blood. I relate these facts thinking they may interest you, as it is not likely that many Englishmen who knew him previously could have seen him later than myself.

Yours very truly, EDWARD TWISLETON.

New Forest. *July 15th.* An enchanting drive through glades and lawns: grand groups of trees and ferns, and a rich smell of heather. The wild ponies formed very pretty groups on knolls backed by forest. We saw brilliant woodpeckers, and strange birds flashed here and there across the open spaces "with vibratory wings." We went to Mark Ash (where the biggest beeches are): the "green gloom" as A. called it very fine under the old and huge trees.

*July 17th.* Two mornings A. wandered alone. One day the forest was "mystical and sad, wrapped in cloud."

These lines (in "The Last Tournament") were made on an old oak here:

A stump of oak half-dead,  
From roots like some black coil of carven snakes,  
Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid air  
Bearing an eagle's nest.

*July 18th.* A. and Hallam set out to walk to Romsey Church. A. thought that it was one of the simplest and finest churches in England; it reminded us of William's church at Caen. Lionel and I followed, driving, and found them, as I thought we should, near the river Test. Part of it higher up A. said was "every square inch a ripple," and at Romsey he was charmed with the swift clear stream gliding over its rushy bed.

*July 19th.* A. walked to Beaulieu Abbey thro' the woods, Lionel and I drove over the heath. A postman of the Stony Cross district told A. that all the great yew trees, which A. had been looking for, had been cut down and sold to a cabinetmaker. "They offered them to me for a few pounds," he said.

## “THE SONG OF THE WRENS” 1866

Farringford. *August 11th.* H.'s birthday : we gave a dinner to the farm men. Lincolnshire “frumenty” caused great amusement among them, many not having the courage to touch it.

*August 17th.* We took Lionel to school at Hastings. A. walked twice back along the road with him to comfort him at parting. We then left for Park House, Maidstone, by Battle Abbey and Tunbridge Wells. In the evening, at the Lushingtons' request, A. read “The Victim, or The Norse Queen,” “The Voyage,” and “All along the Valley.” A. and Edmund talked metaphysics in the Bow-room : they have engrossed A. much of late.

Mr. [now Sir] George Grove wrote asking A. to make a cycle of songs for music :

Mr. Payne tells me he has communicated to you a little proposal of mine for a Book of Songs,<sup>1</sup> and at his request I send you Heine's *Lieder* because I alluded to them in my letter as being often used by the German musicians to set to music. Those I was more particularly thinking of are the Songs I to VIII, p. 36-45, which Schumann has set as *Liederkreis*, and those beginning p. 106, out of which he has made a similar selection. But why one should send you patterns of songs when your own “Little Birdie” (to name but one) is a perfect model, I don't know. It was more because of the way the Germans have of connecting several songs together. If the idea of the first song could be brought back again in the last it would help the composer very much, for nothing is so charming in music as to wind off a composition in that way. Beethoven (as great in small things as in the greatest) has done it with masterly effect in a *Liederkreis* called

<sup>1</sup> The result was “The Song of the Wrens.”

“An die ferne Geliebte.”<sup>1</sup> If you like I will write that out for you with the greatest pleasure.

*October.* We have subscribed to the defence of Governor Eyre. A. was anxious about the facts in Jamaica, not knowing whether to accede to the request of the Committee that he would place his name on it; as he could not approve of all the late proceedings. The question of course was, “Could Governor Eyre have prevented revolution and massacre otherwise?”

*To the Secretary of Governor Eyre's  
Defence Committee*

*October, 1866.*

SIR,

I thank you and the Committee for the honour done to me.

I sent my small subscription as a tribute to the nobleness of the man, and as a protest against the spirit in which a servant of the State, who has saved to us one of the Islands of the Empire, and many English lives, seems to be hunted down.

But my entering my name on your Committee might be looked upon as pledge that I approve of all the measures of Governor Eyre. I cannot assert that I do this, neither would I say that he has erred, my knowledge of the circumstances not being sufficient.

<sup>1</sup> My father often asked that these songs, and *Molly's Abschied*, might be sung to him: he was fond of Beethoven's music.



In the meantime, the outbreak of our Indian Mutiny remains as a warning to all but madmen against want of vigour and swift decisiveness.

I have the honour to be

Your most obedient servant,

A. TENNYSON.

1867

*My mother's journal.*—*Bayard Taylor, Hallam's illness, Blackdown, Lyme Regis, and South Devon*

A. has written a letter to Longfellow, "We English and Americans should all be brothers as none other among the Nations can be; and some of us, come what may, will always be so I trust."

*Feb. 21st.* Mr. and Mrs. Bayard Taylor came. A. gave them some of Mr. Ellis' sherry made in 1815, called "Waterloo Sherry," and some of Mr. Ellis' yet more "gorgeous wines." She (a charming German lady) told A. the striking story of her uncle, now an old man of 70 or 80, the son of the late Duke of Saxe-Gotha's chief huntsman. He was at the time of Napoleon's highest power about fifteen, and was so wrought upon by hearing Napoleon continually called by his countrymen "the chief enemy of the human race," that he determined to shoot the great man while he was passing alone down one of the long corridors of the palace, as he often did when he visited the Duke, of whom he was fond. One day accordingly the youth posted himself in a corner of one of the bay windows of the corridor, rifle in hand. He heard the Emperor's footstep in the distance coming nearer and nearer. As

Napoleon approached, he put his hand to the trigger. But Napoleon, without stopping, just turned and fixed his great eagle eye upon him, in such a terrible fashion that the youth was paralysed with fear, trembled from head to foot, almost swooned away, and let his rifle drop with a clang upon the ground. No notice was taken of this incident.

Then A. spoke of Napoleon coming in hot and dusty from battle, and seeing the Duchess of Weimar, and saying, "*Êtes-vous la Duchesse de Weimar?*" of her simple answer, "*Oui, Sieur*"; and of his there-upon shouting savagely, "*J'écraserai votre mari.*" "Wellington said of Napoleon," A. added, "that he was 'emphatically *not* a gentleman.'"

*March 1st.* A telegram arrived, telling of Hallam's serious attack on his lungs. We started off by the next boat to Marlborough.

We telegraphed for Dr. Symonds at Bristol.

This is all I could record about the terrible time. A. was very calm, but deeply moved. At the crisis he said humbly, "I have made up my mind to lose him : God will take him pure and good, straight from his mother's lessons. Surely it would be better for him than to grow up such a one as I am." He was wrapped up in the boy. He talked a great deal about "our all being gathered up somehow into the all-absorbing love of God, into a state, infinitely higher than we can now conceive of."<sup>1</sup>

He wrote to Sir John Simeon :

*March, 1867.*

MY DEAR SIMEON,

He is better to-day, yesterday we thought he was going, for the pulse stopt and

<sup>1</sup> These words of my father's are quoted from the Bradley diary.

## LETTER TO PALGRAVE

1867

he was seized with a coup de nerfs. We telegraphed for Dr. Symonds of Bristol, who gave us good hope that he is past the worst and will recover ; it was an attack of pneumonia with low symptoms.

Yours ever, A. T.

We returned to Farringford where Hallam speedily recovered, thence went to Hindhead, and before going A. wrote to F. T. Palgrave.

DEAR PALGRAVE,

*23rd March, 1867.*

I suppose I may come up to town some time after we are settled in our farm-house, where I have taken rooms for ourselves and three servants for two years, and can have them for six if I choose. We go there in about a week, more or less : there will be one room for a guest.

I don't give the name of the place because I wish it to be kept secret : I am not flying from the cockneys here to tumble in among the cockneys there I hope : tho' some of my friends assert that it will be so, and that there will be more cockneys and of a worse kind, but I don't believe them, for the house is quite solitary and five miles from town or village. You ask whether Doré's illustrations are a success. I liked the first four I saw very much, tho' they were not quite true to the text, but the rest not so well ; one I hate, that where the dead lady<sup>1</sup> is stuck up in a chair, with her eyes open, as if her

<sup>1</sup> Elaine.

father had forgotten to close them, or as if she had opened them again, for they are closed in the voyage down the river. On the whole I am against illustrators, except one could do with them as old Mr. Rogers did, have them to breakfast twice a week and explain your own views to them over and over again.

My wife (thanks for your enquiries) had been shut up in the house for nearly three months, with cough and cold. The Queen sent her an invitation to go with me to Osborne, but I was obliged to make her excuses, and went alone. You say that you expect another little one in June : ought I to congratulate you or condole ? Love to Mrs. Palgrave from both.

Believe me yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

*April 29th.* We arrived at Grayshott farm, where we were to spend the early summer. In the copses the nightingales were singing ; the anemones were out in all the woods.

*May 18th.* A. has bought Morris' *British Birds*. One evening we heard the fern owl quite close to us, and the snap, snap of the wings as it flew away. The boys had been that day with their father to White's Selborne, and climbed the "Hanger." He liked the pretty village, and the Bells who lived in White's house.

He read the new version of one of the "Window Songs," "Take my love" ; Heine's "Songs" ; and some of the *Reign of Law*.<sup>1</sup> The chapter on "Law

<sup>1</sup> By the Duke of Argyll.

in Politics" was specially interesting to us. The quotations from A. expressed some of the deepest truths. Seeing these, I felt that perhaps I had been wrong in not having fulfilled my half-formed purpose of making a book of "Great Thoughts and Sayings of Tennyson." Perhaps not, for I always think great thoughts and sayings lose so much of their life and point when drawn from their natural context. With the boys he was reading *Flodden Field*, the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, and the 1st *Georgic*.

*June 5th.* Mrs. Gilchrist and Mr. Simmons having taken endless trouble in communicating with Mr. Lucas about Black-horse Copse on Blackdown,<sup>1</sup> we went there in an odd procession, Lionel on a donkey with a lady's saddle, I driving in the basket-carriage, the rest walking. The wheels spun round on the axles without touching ground in some of the deep ruts, and the carriage had to be lifted over, William leading the pony carefully. At last we reached the charming ledge on the heathery down. This looks over an immense view bounded by the South-downs on the south, by Leith Hill on the north. Copse-wood surrounds the ledge, and the hill protects it from the north-west. The foxglove was in full bloom. A. helped me down the mountain-path. We all-enjoyed the day thoroughly.

*June 16th.* Mr. Lear came from Liphook: he liked our neighbourhood so much that he said we were to look out for some land for him hereabouts.

He told an excellent story about a misquotation of a passage in "You ask me, why." A friend of his

<sup>1</sup> Now Aldworth. My mother, writing this June of our home life, says: "I think it is a thing to be very thankful for, having a home of one's very own, especially taking in the hope that one's children may live on there when we are gone, and have it made still more a home by the memories of childhood."

remarked to him: "It is a well-known fact that Tennyson hates travelling." "Nonsense," answered Lear, "he loves it." "On the contrary," the friend retorted, "he hates it, and he says so himself somewhere :

‘ And I will *die* before I see  
The palms and temples of the South.’ ”

Among other letters at this time A. wrote the following to an unknown correspondent, a Mr. Tennyson of Chester, who had named his child "Alfred."

*June 13th, 1867.*

DEAR SIR,

I have not been at home for many weeks or your kindly letter would not have remained so long without an answer, notwithstanding the multitude of letters, which really make it impossible for me to answer all. You have paid me a great compliment, nay, it is more than a compliment—in naming your son after me.

I wish him a useful and happy career, and only hope that he will take a better model than his namesake to shape his life by.

It is doubtless a pleasure to know that I have had sometimes the power to cheer the soldier, whose life of devotion to his country I honour ; and few things in the world ought to gratify me so deeply as the assurance that anything I may have written has had an influence for good.

Believe me, dear sir, yours truly,

A. TENNYSON.

## LETTER TO DUKE OF ARGYLL 1867

He also wrote to the Duke of Argyll :

STOATLEY FARM, HASLEMERE,  
1867.

MY DEAR DUKE,

I shall be very glad to read your book [*The Reign of Law*], which I suppose is waiting for me at Farringford. We are at present lodging at a farmhouse here in the neighbourhood of Haslemere. My wife has always had a fancy for the sandy soil and heather-scented air of this part of England, and we are intending to buy a few acres, and build a little home here, whither we may escape when the cockneys are running over my lawns at Freshwater. I am sorry that I did not see Lord Lorne, but I will call for the calumet<sup>1</sup> when I go to town. It is odd that the Americans always send me pipes, or tobacco, as if I cared for nothing else in this world ; and their tobacco is not my tobacco, nor their pipes my pipes : bird's-eye and a Milo-cutty being more according to my fancy than costlier things. I don't however mean to undervalue Longfellow's gift. I envy you your journey. I have been along the Corniche, as you may read in my little poem "The Daisy." I don't suppose that Europe, or Asia perhaps, has a more splendid piece of coast-scenery, but at this time of year you will hardly see it in perfection. Perhaps however if the Autumn tints remain they may

<sup>1</sup> Sent by Longfellow.

more than make up for the loss of that opulence of summer, which seemed to satiate heart and eye when I looked from the hill above Nice, over rock and ruin and down-streaming vineyard, to the many coloured Mediterranean. We did not get further than Florence, and Rome is only a dream to me and not a very distinct one.

Mine and my wife's love to the Duchess, and all joy to you both. You must feel like the starling that has got out, and the sweets of office outsweetened by the sweets of out of office. Hallam is at Marlborough and flourishing; Lionel with Dr. Hunt near Hastings. Lady Edith is, we trust, quite recovered, and enjoying her tour.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

*June 16th.* The Blackdown land was bought: Mr. Estcourt being most kind and helpful. A. met Mr. Knowles at the station; he did not recognize him; but, when Mr. Knowles had called at Farringford, A. had said to him as he does to most strangers, "I am so short-sighted that I shall not know you if I meet you unless you speak to me." [Mr. Knowles accordingly spoke to him, reminding him of this; and A. knowing that Mr. Knowles was an architect, said, "You had better build me my house on Blackdown."]

Mr. Knowles came to luncheon and looked at our sketch and plans, and took them home to put them in "working form," as he said. A. and he called at Mr. Buckton's<sup>1</sup> house in Haslemere.

<sup>1</sup> A well-known Fellow of the Royal Society, who afterwards became a friend of my father's.



*Lyme and South Devon*

On August 23rd my father left for Bridport.

He was led on to Lyme by the description of the place in Miss Austen's *Persuasion*, walking thither the nine miles over the hills from Bridport. On his arrival he called on Palgrave, and, refusing all refreshment, he said at once : " Now take me to the Cobb, and show me the steps from which Louisa Musgrove fell." Palgrave and he then walked to the undercliff, " a noble natural terrace, edging the sea and tossed into endless small mounds and valleys."

Palgrave writes :

Tennyson said, " this exactly represents some of the romantic landscape before my mind's eye in the ' Idylls ' : little winding glades, closed all round with grassy mounds and wild shrubs, where one might fancy the sudden appearance of a knight riding, or a spell-bound damsel." This peculiar character (which was partly suggested to him by the backgrounds of mediæval illuminations) he also once pointed out in a certain field of his own [called Pathacre] beyond his summer-house at Farringford.

After this the friends went to Princetown and Dartmoor. Palgrave writes :

Our way lay right across Dartmoor, desolate and eerie even under the brightest sun, to Princetown : a village gloomy in itself from its high wind-exposed site,

and more so from the great convict-prison, whose inhabitants we saw working in sad files and guarded by rifles from escaping. The inn, rough and small but clean, was in accord with the surroundings. One bedroom with two huge four-posters was allotted us: and Tennyson lay in his with a candle, reading hard the book which on this trip he had taken for his novel-companion, and at every disengaged moment opened whilst rambling over the Moor. This chanced to be one of Miss Yonge's deservedly popular tales, wherein a leading element is the deferred Church Confirmation of a grown-up person. On Tennyson read, till I heard him cry with satisfaction, "I see land! Mr. \* \* is just going to be confirmed!" after which, darkness and slumber.

Thence they made their way to Tavistock, Dartmouth, Salcombe and Exeter.

*My mother's journal*

Dec. 1st. "The Song of the Wrens" ["Window Songs"] and "The Victim," printed at the Canford Press, received from Sir Ivor Guest. A. is reading Hebrew (*Job* and the *Song of Solomon* and *Genesis*): he talked much about his Hebrew, and about all-pervading Spirit being more understandable by him than solid matter. He brought down to me his psalm-like poem, "Higher Pantheism." Louie [daughter of Sir John Simeon], who was with us a day or two later, said: "As I sat at breakfast, he came behind me, and in fun dropped on my plate the MS. of 'Wages,'<sup>1</sup> which he had perfected during the night."

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, Feb. 1868.

## MEMORIES OF TRINITY LODGE 1867

“Vivien” and “Guinevere,” illustrated by Doré, were brought out at Christmas.

A. wrote to the Master of Trinity [answering an invitation which was accepted in Feb. 1868] :

A smoking room !

1867.

If I put pipe to mouth *there*, should I not see gray Elohim ascending out of the earth, him whom we capped among the walks in golden youth, and hear a voice, “Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?” I happened to say to Clark that, from old far-away undergraduate recollections of the unapproachable and august seclusion of Trinity Lodge, Cambridge, I should feel more blown out with glory by spending a night under your roof, than by having lived Sultanlike for a week in Buckingham Palace. Now, you see, I was not proposing a visit to you, but speaking as after wine and over a pipe, and falling into a trance with my eyes open. At the same time, your invitation and that of Mrs. Thompson (to whom present all my best thanks) is so kindly and hearty, that I may, I can’t say when at this moment, try to realize this vision, and if I do I will let you know some time beforehand. Meantime, my dear T., with my wife’s best regards,

I am yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

And to J. Kenward :

FARRINGFORD, 1867.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for the first volume of *Barddas*, which I have not yet seen, but which will arrive in due time from Moxon's. I envy your visit to Villemarqué. When I was in Brittany,—stopping at Auray, I think,—I asked the landlord how far off he lived, and I found it was some 14 or 15 miles, a long way to post, and it was not certain whether he were at home or not. Believe me, dear Sir, in great haste, for (substitute "letters" for "bairns") I am like the old woman who lived in a shoe,

Yours truly, A. TENNYSON.

1868

*My mother's journal.*—"*The Lover's Tale*," *Hebrew Studies*, Longfellow, Darwin, building of Aldworth, Tintern, Irish Church Bill.

*January 11th.* A. read the article on the Talmud by Deutsch. He talked of publishing "*The Lover's Tale*," because some one was sure to publish it some day. I urged this. We heard that written copies were being circulated. He said : "Allowance must be made for redundance of youth. I cannot pick it to pieces and make it up again. It is rich and full, but there are mistakes in it." For instance he pointed out one in the passage beginning : "Even as the all-enduring camel, etc.," "There could not have been a crimson colouring

in the middle of the moonlight night. The poem is the breath of young love.”<sup>1</sup>

*January 24th.* Canon Warburton and the Bradleys visited us. Mrs. Bradley writes :

Mr. Tennyson said to us that it would not be easy to understand the allusions in “The Lover’s Tale,” unless we knew the story in Boccaccio from which it was taken ; that it was the tale of a lover, whose mistress became the wife of another man. She fell ill, died apparently, and was buried. The old lover went to her tomb : on opening her coffin he found her heart beating : he took her home to his mother’s house, where she gave birth to a child. Afterwards the lover invited his friends and neighbours to a feast, among these the husband of the lady. In the middle of the feast the lover brought in a veiled figure, and asked the guests : “To whom would belong by right a dog, whose master turned him out to die, and which was rescued and restored to life and health by another ?” The unanimous opinion was given that “the man who saved the dog had a right to him.” The lover then unveiled the lady with her babe, and said to the husband, “I restore you your own.” He then rode away and was seen no more.

*Jan. 25th.* Mr. Tennyson told us how much better he felt spiritually, mentally, and bodily, while engaged on some long poem ; and how often in the intervals he found time hang heavily, and a longing came for regular work. He said to my husband : “I envy you your life of hard, regular, useful, important work.”

He told us that he taught himself Italian by writing

<sup>1</sup> My father had some copies of the poem printed to see what it was like.

all the words and sentences he wanted especially to remember (making a kind of private grammar) on the sides of a large old-fashioned mantelpiece, in his Somersby bedroom. He wrote them in a fine small hand, very elaborately ; and he got them up whilst he was dressing and smoking : but he went away for a few days, and when he came back the writing had all vanished. He blamed the housemaid, who answered "contemptuously," that she "had washed off the nasty, dirty mess and cleaned the mantelpiece nicely for him." He is full of the *Song of Solomon*, reading it in Hebrew : and he said that most people knew nothing about it, that in the coarsely-painted, misrepresented, ununderstandable story, given in the Bible translation, there is hardly a trace of what he calls "The most perfect Idyl of the faithful love of a country girl for her shepherd, and of her resistance to the advances of a great king, that ever was written." The study of Hebrew was a great pleasure to him : it occupied his whole mind and time.

He told us that he was always puzzled by that expression in the *Song of Solomon*, chap. iv., "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep . . . whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren among them," but that in his present study of Hebrew he had discovered its meaning. "Every tooth corresponds to its fellow, and there are no gaps among them."

*Jan. 29th.* [A Play in the evening.] Play over, the drawing-room was cleared for dancing. Mr. Tennyson led off Lady Simeon, Sir John was my partner. Mr. Tennyson thoroughly gave himself up to the enjoyment of waltzing, and did not sit down once ; he was very merry and full of fun.

On January 31st my father left, by way of Winchester, for Haslemere, to fix the site of

the new house on Blackdown. The name of the plot of land, "Black-horse Copse," was changed to "Aldworth," some of my mother's family having come from a village of that name near Streatley in Berks: where there is a curious old church with the old tombs of her Sellwood ancestors.

The following letter was received from the Reverend W. Warburton (afterwards Canon of Winchester):

WINCHESTER, *Jan.* 14<sup>th</sup>, 1868.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

On the chance of your having found it "tanti" to make your way through the outworks of Hebrew Grammar etc.,<sup>1</sup> I send you a little book which seems to me to be helpful. If you want a nice book to

<sup>1</sup> Canon Warburton writes the following note on this letter:

This belongs to a passage in your dear and honoured father's life not generally known, namely, his beginning the study of Hebrew with a view to making a metrical version, or failing this a new prose version, at once poetical and correct, of the *Book of Job*. In connection with this undertaking (which was found, unfortunately, to present fatal difficulties) I remember him one day turning over the pages of Renan's wonderful translation of *Job*, in my house at Winchester, and coming upon the famous passage about the Warhorse—"Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" "Qui revêt son cou d'une crinière flottante?" "Why, that is downright prose! I think I could do better than that." "He saith among the trumpets Ha! Ha!" "Au premier bruit de la trompette il dit 'Allons!'" "What a very French horse!" Also in connection with this project, I may remind you that he one day asked the late Master of Balliol (then staying at Farringford) to give him a literal translation of one of the verses. "But I can't read Hebrew," faltered the Master. "What," he exclaimed, "you the Priest of a religion, and can't read your own sacred Books!"

W. WARBURTON.

read with *Solomon's Song*, I recommend you Ginsburg's *Cohemoth*. He is of course a German, but writes in English. *Solomon's Song* is only eight short chapters, and very nearly comes up to *Job* in interest, when properly translated, and has a much more curious history.

With kindest remembrances to Mrs. Tennyson,

Believe me ever sincerely yours,

W. WARBURTON.

P.S. Ginsburg is barely half an inch thick.

In answer to Mr. Warburton's letter my father wrote :

Jan. 21st, 1868.

MY DEAR WARBURTON,

No Ginsburg yet ; and I looked rather reckoningly for it every morning. What is the publisher's name ? will you write again ? or shall I tell mine to get it for me ? I flatter myself that I have hit upon something like the right sound of the *y*. I can produce a sound in the throat (for is it not a guttural ?) something between a *y* and a *g*, and easily melting into a vowel, where the *y* is supposed to be soft.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

*My mother's journal.—Farringford*

*April.* There has been a great deal of smoke in the yew-trees this year. One day there was such a cloud that it seemed to be a fire in the shrubbery. [It was then that he wrote the speech of Ambrosius, etc. in "The Holy Grail" with the lines about this "smoke," that is, the pollen of the yew blown and scattered by the wind.



O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,  
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years.

He would say : "I made most of 'The Holy Grail' walking up and down my field 'Maiden's Croft.'" "In Memoriam," Section xxxix., was also written at this time.]

Many pirated editions of the poems having been smuggled into England, a letter is written to Mr. Disraeli, begging him to try and stop this illicit trade.

He answered as follows :

HUGHENDEN MANOR, *April 15th, 1868.*

DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

I have sent your papers up to town, that the matter may be examined and reported on to me by competent persons. You will hear officially in due course, and may rely upon your interests being not neglected.

I would not, however, have you answered only by a secretary, and therefore I trouble you with this to say that I remember our acquaintance, and am proud of it, and am always

Faithfully yours, B. DISRAELI.

*April 23rd.* Shakespeare's birthday. A. laid the foundation stone of Aldworth. Mrs. Gilchrist had seized the few minutes before post after the laying of the stone to write to me. Weather glorious, Sir John and Lady Simeon and Louie and Mr. Knowles there. Sir John said a few simple and appropriate words when the stone was laid. A. in excellent spirits ; he was pleased with the inscription on the stone—"Prosper thou the work of our hands, O prosper thou our handiwork."

He wrote to Baron von Tauchnitz about his edition of the poems :

FARRINGFORD, *April 29th*, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR,

I pray your pardon for not having answered you earlier. I scarce know by what carelessness, or fatality, I have omitted, till now, to acknowledge yours of February 25th; but finding your letter lately at the bottom of my pocket, I was struck with my own ungraciousness, and, as I say, pardon my negligence. I am quite aware that I made rather a bad bargain with you, in selling the continental copyright for so small a sum, and my publisher affirms (whether rightly or not) that I annually lose some hundreds of pounds by this transaction. I am also aware that the royalty you offer me now is all of your free grace, and that I have no claim upon you. I can only hope that my accepting this offer will not be made a pretext by sellers (of course I am not including yourself) and buyers for introducing more copies into England. Accept my thanks therefore.

Believe me, my dear sir, yours very truly,

A. TENNYSON.

I hope your son I had the pleasure of seeing once at Farringford is well and prospering.

*Part of a letter from Mr. Fowett*

*May*, 1868.

I am glad that Alfred is thinking of Hildebrand. I remember a long time ago reading Bowden's Life

of him, and either the man or the book struck me greatly.

Hildebrand's dying in exile might give an opportunity of drawing first the Roman Catholic Ideal, secondly, the impossibility of it, notwithstanding its grandeur.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*                      \*

I thought "Lucretius"<sup>1</sup> a most noble poem, and that is the universal impression.

I cannot see any reason why Alfred should not write better and better as long as he lives, and as Mr. Browning says that he hopes and intends to do.

I know that a poet is an inspired person, who is not to be judged by ordinary rules, nor do I mean to interfere with him. But I can never see why some of the dreams of his youth should not still be realized.<sup>2</sup>

With love to him and the boys,

Believe me, dear Mrs. Tennyson,

Affectionately yours,

B. JOWETT.

*July 15th.* Mr. Longfellow arrived with a party of ten. Very English he is, we thought. A. considered his "Hiawatha" his most original poem, and he quoted his translation, "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." Both poets admired Platen's *In der Nacht*.

*July 16th.* The Longfellows and he talked much of spiritualism, for he was greatly interested in that subject, but he suspended his judgment, and thought that, if in such manifestations there is anything, "Pucks, not the spirits of dead men, reveal themselves." We invited forty or fifty neighbours to tea. Mr. Longfellow

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> The completion of the "Idylls."

spoke kindly and graciously to each guest : Mrs. Fraser Tytler and her daughters were among them, and Mr. Longfellow said, in his old-fashioned, courteous way, "It was worth while coming to England to see such young ladies."<sup>1</sup>

The Longfellows were all charmed with our Down. Indeed I believe the ladies wished to remain on the Island.<sup>2</sup>

*July 18th.* Poor little Alamayu, King Theodore of Abyssinia's son, came with Captain Speedy. The Captain said that Alamayu would not sleep without both his [Captain Speedy's] arms round him lest the Evil One should take him. Alamayu's nerves had been greatly shaken by the siege of Magdala, and the knowledge of his father's fate. King Theodore had killed himself, when the English had scaled the rock of Magdala, and his body had been found just inside the gate of the city. Captain Speedy tried to put the boy off when he began to speak of this, but he said, "Oh, I know it is so, I heard them tell all about it." He exclaimed that our English bread was the best thing he had ever tasted. When he drove past the large ilex here, he said, "Take care : there will be an elephant in that jungle."

*July 20th.* To Eton, to enter Lionel there, as his health could not endure the cold climate of Marlborough. We went to St. George's Chapel. A. and Hallam rowed in Mr. Warre's boat to the boat-race.

*July 25th.* We drove to Tintern. A pleasant little

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Mrs. G. F. Watts and Mrs. Edward Liddell.

<sup>2</sup> Longfellow writes (July 19th) to Mrs. Fields : "We came last night from Freshwater, where we had passed two happy days with Tennyson, not at his house, but mostly with him. He was very cordial and amiable ; and gave up his whole time to us. At Farringford your memory is fresh and fragrant."

cottage inn. We saw the golden cornfields thro' the windows of the beautiful Abbey, "the happy autumn fields."<sup>1</sup> We climbed up the Wind Cliff, a glorious view of the Wye joining the Severn, bounded by dark woods crowning the cliffs.

To Chepstow, thence to the Castle of Caerphilly.

*Aug. 17th.* Farringford. Mr. Darwin called, and seemed to be very kindly, unworldly, and agreeable. A. said to him, "Your theory of Evolution does not make against Christianity": and Darwin answered, "No, certainly not." In the afternoon the Dean of Chichester and Sir William Wood [afterwards Lord Hatherley] called. It was very interesting to see the old friends together. Dr. Hook asked A. to read "Enoch Arden." He replied he could not to-day. Dr. Hook thereupon began in fun to read it so badly that A. clutched the book, "No, I cannot stand that," and read it all to them.

*Sept. 9th.* A. read me a bit of his "San Graal," which he has now begun.

*Sept. 11th.* He read me more of the "San Graal": very fine. We drove on the Down. Kingfishers and osyter-catchers seen. Last night he went to Mr. Pritchard's to look thro' his telescope, and was charmed with the Nebula in Hercules, "that mighty firmament"; and with Jupiter and his four moons "filling all the field," and as he said "more homey"—the planet seeming so much more akin to earth.

*Sept. 14th.* He has almost finished the "San Graal" in about a week [he had seen the subject clearly for some time]. It came like a breath of inspiration. I am pleased to think that the Queen and the Crown Princess wished him to write it.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. vol. ii. p. 28.

## IRISH CHURCH BILL

*Sept. 23rd.* We took Lionel to Eton, and left him in Mr. Stone's house. At Mr. Warre's request A. read the "San Graal" MS. complete in the garden.

Of his views on the Irish Church Bill I wrote to Mr. W. C. Bennett :

"We look with anxiety to the Irish Church Bill, feeling that the only wise course, as far as we see, is to retain the Endowment, apportioning part to the English Church in Ireland, part to Educational purposes, or any other equally sacred for the good of the Roman Catholics.

Any severance of Church and State is, we think, above all things to be deprecated, as fostering the common tendency to look upon parts of man as man instead of the whole being. I write this seeing how much interest you take in politics, and feeling how much we all ought to take."

*Oct. 10th.* A. wrote to Mr. Gladstone about the alleged bad treatment of the Fenians in prison, enclosing *Lays of a Convict* :

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

The enclosed has been sent to me, possibly to you also : if not, read it now ; it seems to me a terrible cry. I don't much believe in the accuracy of the Irishman generally :—but I wish you, who enlightened us formerly on the Neapolitan prisons, to consider whether here too there be not a grievous wrong to be righted.

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*An unpublished Epigram by A.  
(written about this time)*

*By a Darwinian*

How is it that men have so little grace,  
When a great man's found to be bad and base,  
That they chuckle and chatter and mock ?  
We come from apes—and are far removed—  
But rejoice when a bigger brother has proved  
That he springs from the common stock.

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*November.* A. went to stay with Mr. Knowles at Clapham Common.

*My father's letter-diary*

*November.* The Hollies, Clapham Common. I have sent the “Grail” to be *printed*, and I will send a copy when it comes. I read it last night to Strahan and Pritchard, who professed themselves delighted. I am grieved for the poor old shepherd losing his wife. Jowett's letter is very kind, but I do not like Lionel's going by rail alone to Oxford. I went to Miss Eden's, where we tried to move a table mesmerically. Browning came in, and returned with me and Knowles to dinner, where again I read the “Grail,” and Browning said it was my “best and highest.” B. is coming again to-night to read part of his new poem,<sup>1</sup> also Macmillan.

<sup>1</sup> “The Ring and the Book.”

*Nov. 21st.* I do not think I can possibly come down while this business<sup>1</sup> is yet pending, for it is not yet finished. In the meantime I have written to Pritchard (who is on the election committee on the other side—Conservative) to pair off with me; and, if he be not going to vote, to get Mr. Cotton, who is I suppose against Simeon, to pair off with me.

Browning read his Preface<sup>2</sup> to us last night, full of strange vigour and remarkable in many ways; doubtful whether it can ever be popular.

I am not going as yet to Palgrave's: if I go, it will be on Monday afternoon, but I rather want to come home again as soon as I can, to work at the other "Idylls of the King."

*Nov. 23rd.* I have sent the whole of "The Lover's Tale" to the press, and am to have it back on Thursday. I stop here till Friday morning, when Gifford Palgrave comes with his bride. The agreement [with Strahan] is now all ready for signature. Woolner is out in the country, doing Darwin's bust.

*To Sir John Simeon*

*November 17th, 1868.*

MY DEAR SIR JOHN,

I return you the voting-paper duly signed, whereby you will see that I intend to

<sup>1</sup> Leaving the Moxons.

<sup>2</sup> To "The Ring and the Book."



give you my vote ; but, in case the business that brought me to town should unavoidably detain me, I take this occasion to say, that I should think it quite a misfortune for us if you are not again returned as our member.

It is in my opinion no small advantage to the House of Commons to have a Liberal Catholic Christian among them, who may stand up in his place to refute the bigotries both of Roman and Protestant.

I cannot but trust that your well-earned personal popularity will carry you successfully through the present Election, in spite of this invasion of the "*Over-ers*" as we call them in the Island.

Believe me, my dear Sir John,  
Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*My mother's journal*

On December 2nd A. went abroad with Mr. Locker to Paris, and, when he returned to Farringford, found the following letter from the Rev. Charles Cockin :

24 PARLIAMENT STREET, HULL.  
1868.

SIR,

In reading an old translation of Du Bartas<sup>1</sup> I was struck with the following verse from the "*Woodman's Beare*," Stanza 55 :

<sup>1</sup> The passage quoted is not the work of Du Bartas but of Joshua Sylvester, the translator of Du Bartas, and is in a poem called "*The Woodman's Beare*," appended to the *Divine Weekes and Workes* of Du Bartas.

"But her slender virgin waste  
Made me beare her girdle spight,  
Which the same by day imbraste  
Though it were cast off at night :  
That I wisht, I dare not say,  
To be girdle night and day."

May I be pardoned for my curiosity in wishing to know whether these lines suggested the two last stanzas in the song in the "Miller's Daughter"?

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,  
CHARLES E. COCKIN.

To this he replied :

SIR, FARRINGFORD, *Dec. 31st*, 1868.

I never saw the lines before : and the coincidence is strange enough, and until I saw the signature I fully believed them to be a hoax.  
Yours faithfully, A. TENNYSON.

He wrote to Mr. Palgrave about "The Holy Grail" :

FARRINGFORD, *24th December*, 1868.

MY DEAR PALGRAVE,

You distress me when you tell me that, without leave given by me, you showed my poem to Max Müller : not that I care about Max Müller's seeing it, but I do care for your not considering it a sacred deposit. Pray do so in future : otherwise I shall see some boy in some Magazine making a lame imitation of it, which a clever boy could do in twenty minutes—and, though his work would be worth nothing,

it would take away the bloom and freshness from mine.

I can't conceive how the Grail M. M. mentions can well be treated by a poet of the 13th century from a similar point of view to mine, who write in the 19th, but, if so, I am rather sorry for it, as I rather piqued myself on my originality of treatment.

If Max Müller will give you or me the name of the book, which contains all the Mediæval literature about the Grail, I will order it of the London Library; though, if it be in German prose, I fear I shan't have the patience to wade thro' a tenth of it.

The “Grail” is not likely to be published for a year or two, and certainly not along with the other thing which you hate so much (too much it seems to me). I shall write three or four more of the “Idylls,” and link them together as well as I may. Jowett comes on Saturday, and I will give him your message. The boys are both here and well, not at Farringford which is getting scoured and cleaned, but at a house at Alum Bay (Headon Hall) where Nature, in winter at least, seems always in a rage.

Please attend to my request about the “Grail” and the “Lover's Tale,” and show them to no one, or if you can't depend upon yourself, forward them to me.

Always yours,  
A. TENNYSON.

Publications 1868 :

- "The Victim," *Good Words* (January).
- "On a Spiteful Letter," *Once a Week* (January).<sup>1</sup>
- "Wages," *Macmillan's Magazine* (February).
- "1865-66," *Good Words* (March).
- "Lucretius," *Macmillan's Magazine* (May).

1869

*My mother's journal.*—"The Holy Grail," *Switzerland*

*January.* A. read "The Holy Grail" to the Bradleys, explaining the realism and symbolism, and how the natural, if people cared, could always be made to account for the supernatural.

He pointed out "the difference between the five visions of the Grail, as seen by the Holy Nun, Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, Sir Lancelot, Sir Bors, according to their different, their own peculiar natures and circumstances, and the perfection or imperfection of their Christianity. He dwelt on the mystical treatment of every part of his subject, and said the key<sup>2</sup> is to be found in a careful reading of Sir Percivale's vision and subsequent fall and nineteenth century temptations."

<sup>1</sup> My father wrote to *Once a Week*, December 24th, 1867: "It is no particular letter that I meant. I have had dozens of them from one quarter or another."

<sup>2</sup> See p. 116. This passage is taken from Mrs. Bradley's diary.

## LETTER FROM GLADSTONE 1869

*Jan. 15th.* To-day the Moxon connection of 37 years ceased. A. however anonymously still allows the widow [Mrs. Moxon] and her daughters a considerable sum a year. We would that the necessity for leaving had not arisen.<sup>1</sup>

*Feb. 13th.* A. read what he had done of the birth and marriage of "Arthur."

*Feb. 16th.* The agreement with Mr. Strahan came for signature. Mr. Strahan had offered to publish for A. for nothing, but that A. would not allow. A letter arrived from Mr. Gladstone in answer to one about our proposal for increasing the post-office percentage on the small deposits of the poor.

11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,  
*Feb. 16th, 1869.*

DEAR MRS. TENNYSON,

Taxation and all that belongs to it form rather a painful chapter in human affairs. For good nine years and over I had to pore over that chapter night and day. I am now in a measure emancipated from that and inducted into another and more varied servitude. But the best answer I can make to your note is to claim upon the strength of it that you should within no long time give me an opportunity of conversing upon it with you by a visit to or better still a sojourn in London. My kindest remembrances to your husband.

Sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

Before the end of February A. had read me all "The Coming of Arthur" finished, and was reading at night Browning's "Ring and the Book"—"Pompilia" and "Caponsacchi" are the finest parts.

<sup>1</sup> Virtually through the death of Mr. E. Moxon.

## 1869 FITZGERALD ON BROWNING

Mr. FitzGerald wrote about Mr. Browning :

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,

I have been thinking of you so much for the last two or three days, while the first volume of Browning's *Poems* has been on my table, and I have been trying in vain to read it, and yet the *Anthænæum* tells me it is wonderfully fine. And so sometimes I am drawn to write to you (with only one eye, the other scorched by reading with a paraffin lamp these several winters), and, whether you care for my letter or not, you won't care to answer; and yet I want to know what you yourself think of this poem; you, who are the one man able to judge of it, and magnanimous enough to think me capable of seeing what is fine in it. I never could read Browning. If Browning only gave a few pence for the book he drew from, what will posterity give for his version of it, if posterity ever find it on a stall? If Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope and Tennyson survive, what *could* their readers make out of this Browning a hundred years hence? Anything so utterly unlike the *Ring* too which he considers he has wrought out of the old gold—this shapeless thing. "You are unjust, Fitz"—that is what you will say or think, I fancy. I wish you *would* say as much; and also that you are not angry with me for the use I made of your name, which I am rather afraid of. And I don't at all wish to give you any such offence, and never thought, till too late, that you were jealous of such liberties—even in such a local trifle as I took it in. For you have no more loyal follower than

E. F. G.

Who can hardly see.

May 7th. A. said "Leodogran's Dream" to me, just made, giving the drift of the whole poem.

*May 18th.* A. read the "San Graal." I doubt whether the "San Graal" would have been written but for my endeavour, and the Queen's wish, and that of the Crown Princess. Thank God for it. He has had the subject on his mind for years, ever since he began to write about Arthur and his knights.

*May 25th.* Mr. and Mrs. Fields and Miss Lowell [daughter of James Russell Lowell] came. A. took them to the Needles. Miss Lowell said that her grandmother, Mrs. Spence, used to shut her shutters and put crape on her knocker every 4th of July. Her grandfather was even banished for his love of England. A. assured her that he would drink a "cup of wine" to her grandmother's memory. Miss Lowell saw her first cowslips here. Very pleasant guests.

*June 14th.* A. left Folkestone with Mr. Locker for Munich and Switzerland. Mr. Eardly joined them. Before starting, A. had written to Mr. Locker: "We will go by the Brussels route: we might possibly be detained at Paris, which seems ready to break out into fire."

*Notes made by A. in Switzerland*

"The last cloud clinging to the peak when all the mists have risen." "Snow and rock thro' cloud unbelievably high." "The top of the Jungfrau rich saffron colour at dawn, the faded moon beside it." "The vision over the valley of Schwarenbach." "Splendour of sunlit clouds passing over the shadowed peak of the Eiger."

## CHAPTER III

### TOUR IN SWITZERLAND (1869); ALSO SOME OPINIONS ON POETRY

MR. FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON kindly gave me the following account of his travels with my father :

I am proud to have won the friendship of Alfred Tennyson, "quella fonte che spande di parlar sì largo fiume." I first met him in Publisher Moxon's Dover Street parlour. Shortly afterwards, I think about 1864 or 1865, I stayed with him at Grayshott Hall, near Haslemere. We were cordial, we soon became intimate. I rejoice to think we have always remained so. I have often visited Tennyson at Farringford and at Aldworth, and not seldom he has been my guest. We have not met so constantly of late years. Before Hallam and Lionel Tennyson grew up, I used to see a good deal of him in London, for to be near us at 91 Victoria Street he secured a pied-à-terre in Albert Mansions opposite. It was from there that we sallied forth together to see many of his old friends, among others Carlyle, Froude and Mr. Gladstone, and we often took morning walks in the Parks and Kensington Gardens.

Tennyson and I have made two successful little tours together, to Paris in December 1868, and through



France to Switzerland in June and July, 1869. We also met at St. Moritz in 1873. I found him an exceedingly amiable and most interesting travelling companion.

It was thus that the first tour came about.

Tennyson had not been out of England for eight years or more, and we agreed that it would be very pleasant to go abroad together, if only for a week ; so without more ado, we arranged that on the coming Saturday, the 28th November, he should pick me up at 91 Victoria Street, that we should catch the 4.30 p.m. train at Victoria Station (you see we were precise), and that we should sleep at Dover.

At four o'clock on the day appointed, when I was sitting ready packed and expectant, a message arrived that Tennyson's cold was so severe he could not possibly start, and further that he was to be heard of at Mr. Knowles'. I swallowed my disappointment, went to church next day, forgave Tennyson his cold, and on the Monday drove down to Clapham.

It was then and there that we solemnly agreed to set off on Wednesday, the 2nd December, which we actually did.

Shortly after quitting the wind-swept cliffs of Dover, as we were looking down on the tumbling waves, and enjoying the salt smell and keen spray that flew up towards the bows of the steamer, Tennyson said : " They are swift, glittering deeps, sharp like the back fin of a fish," and so they were.

We took life easily in Paris, went to the Louvre, especially to see the Venus of Milo and a Demosthenes seated ; then there was a little picture by Nicolas Poussin, which Tennyson on the journey had spoken of with pleasure. The subject was the death of Narcissus, Echo slightly in the background, fading slowly away,

and Cupid holding a torch. Tennyson said : "Standing over the dead body he looks like a little god of the world." He gazed at this picture with delight, but I confess I saw little to admire; the colour was disappointing,—indeed I did not consider it a typical specimen of the learned Frenchman.

We again saw this Poussin in 1869. I venture to think that Tennyson's vivid imagination had something to do with his admiration.

We strolled on the Boulevards, we visited the churches, museums and markets, and we went to the theatres; one representation must have been very popular, for we could only get places in a shallow little box, a mere ledge, at the very top of the house, almost touching the ceiling, and cheek-by-jowl with an enormous gas chandelier; it was a beetling precipice; what with the dizzy height, our short sight and the glare, we could distinguish nothing. The stage seemed in shadow, and Tennyson turning to me said gloomily, and I did not want to differ from him, "Locker, this is like being stuck on a spike over Hell." Altogether we got a good deal of discomfiture for our money.

We also paid a visit to the Couvent des Oiseaux; the Sœur Louise Marie was an old friend of the Tennysons, and we saw her under interesting circumstances.

We dined with my old friends Mons. and Madame Mohl, in the Rue du Bac, also at the Maison Dorée, when Mr. and Mrs. Charles Perkins, of Boston, old Roman friends, were our guests. I think all I have said up to this point took place during our first visit to Paris; what follows will refer to the second.

Tennyson was an excellent travelling companion; he endured, good-humouredly endured, many annoyances, some of them irritating enough, and which I might relate, if the doing so would not be making myself and my

companion somewhat ridiculous. I will here jot down any disjointed scraps of our talk, or aught else that occurs to me.

We know that Tennyson's power of expressing himself in his writings is remarkable, and it is equally so in his conversation; he always, and without effort, uses the most felicitous epithets; they light up his sentences and are never pedantic.

Dear reader, while reading these cheerful notes, you must always please to remember that my many-sided travelling companion was a humourist.

Mürren, 19th June. We were looking towards the higher Alps, and Tennyson said that perhaps this earth and all that is on it—storms, mountains, cataracts, the sun and the skies—are the Almighty: in fact, that such is our petty nature, we cannot see Him, but we see His shadow, as it were, a distorted shadow: he added that possibly, at that moment, there might be beings invisible to us, who see the Almighty more clearly than we do, and he illustrated his meaning by saying that we have five senses, but that if we had been born with only one of these, our ideas of Nature would have been very different, much more limited.

Tennyson went on to say that supposing there were creatures who instead of having five senses had five hundred, how far they would be in advance of anything we could conceive of! that a worm or an oyster, as compared with ourselves, had a very limited mental vision, and he added how very small the earth must appear to worms and oysters!

I think Tennyson justly recognised the bounds of our knowledge. He said that "whatever is the object of Faith cannot be the object of Reason. In fine, Faith must be our guide,—*that* Faith which we believe comes to us from a Divine Source."

We talked of the Materialists. "After all," said he, "what is matter?" He added, "I think it is merely the shadow of something greater than itself, and which we poor shortsighted creatures cannot see. If the rationalists are in the right, what is the meaning of all the mosques and temples and cathedrals, spread and spreading over the face of the earth? They will not easily beat the character of our Lord, that union of man and woman, sweetness and strength."

He spoke with great regard of X—, then he added: "I think that I believe more of revealed religion than X— does. He believes in a God, but knows nothing more." I said: "I wonder if he is happy." He replied: "So good a man must be happy." Then he added: "I am not blasé, I see the nothingness of life, I know its emptiness, but I believe in Love, and Virtue, and Duty. Perhaps, thanks to Byron, I was more blasé at fourteen than I am now."

We talked of Byron and Wordsworth. "Of course," said Tennyson, "Byron's merits are on the surface. This is not the case with Wordsworth. You must love Wordsworth ere he will seem worthy of your love. As a boy I was an enormous admirer of Byron, so much so that I got a surfeit of him, and now I cannot read him as I should like to do. I was fourteen when I heard of his death. It seemed an awful calamity; I remember I rushed out of doors, sat down by myself, shouted aloud, and wrote on the sandstone: '*Byron is dead!*'"

He said that as a boy he had "delighted in Pope's *Homer*," but he added, though "Pope is a consummate artist, in the lower sense of the term," he could not now read him. I suppose he meant "lower" as compared with the supreme power and sublime music of *Paradise Lost*, about which I have often heard him quote *Polixenes* in *The Winter's Tale*:

“This is an art  
Which does mend nature, change it rather, but  
The art itself is nature.”

Tennyson went on to say that there was a great wind of words in a good deal of Shelley, but that as a writer of blank verse he was perhaps the most skilful of the moderns.<sup>1</sup> He said: “Nobody admires Shelley more than I once did, and I still admire him. I think I like his ‘Epipsychidion’ as much as anything by him.” He said that Keats had “a keen physical imagination; if he had been here (at Mürren) he would, in one line, have given us a picture of that mountain.” (The Mönch, etc. opposite.)

We often talked of Wordsworth. I remember his saying something to this effect: “You must not think because I speak plainly of Wordsworth’s defects as a poet that I have not a very high admiration of him. I shall never forget my deep emotion the first time I had speech with him. I have a profound admiration for ‘Tintern Abbey.’” And yet even in that poem he considered the old poet had shown a want of literary instinct, or whatever it may be called. He thought it too long. He pointed out that the word “again” occurs four times in the first fourteen lines, that the sixth and seventh lines might have been more terse. “Something like this,” said he, extemporising on the spur of the moment:

That makes a lone place lonelier.

He pencilled these and some other remarks in my volume of Wordsworth. Of course he greatly praised

<sup>1</sup> At the same time my father always spoke of “Wordsworth’s best blank verse as being on the whole the finest since Milton.”

the famous line "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns"—"the permanent in the transitory";—he ended by saying, and saying emphatically, that, putting aside a great deal that Wordsworth had written which was not by any means first rate, he thought that "Wordsworth's very best is the best in its way that has been sent out by the moderns." I think that those were his exact words. I understood him to mean since Milton.

I spoke with admiration of his "Ulysses"; he said, "Yes, there is an echo of Dante in it." He gave "Tithonus" the same position as "Ulysses." He said that if Arthur Hallam had lived he would have been "one of the foremost men of his time, *but not as a poet.*"

He talked of "The Princess" with something of regret, of its fine blank verse, and the many good things in it: "but," said he, "though truly original, it is, after all, only a medley." He added that it was very difficult in blank verse to give descriptions, such as "So that sport \* \* \* the patron with his curls," and at the same time to retain poetical elevation. Tennyson insisted that the employment of rhyme would have made it much easier. He went on to say that Wordsworth attempted this sort of thing in "The Excursion," but not successfully; for instance, "And sitting on the grass partook The fragrant beverage drawn from China's herb." "Why could he not have said 'And sitting on the grass had tea'? There is no doubt that Wordsworth injured fine passages by the introduction of flat and essentially prosaic phrases, such as 'for several hours,' which occurs in his Prelude in the description of the Simplan."

My first sight of Tom Moore was at the Athenæum Club, where, as a boy, I had been taken by my father; we were talking to Lord Monteaigle, when a very little

man, eyeglass in hand, entered the room for an instant, raised himself on the tips of his toes, and glanced around, presumably to see if some person he was in quest of were there, and my father said to me, "That's Tom Moore, the poet." He pronounced it *More*. I told all this to Tennyson, and he said he had first seen Moore at Mr. Rogers' and that "he had a George the Fourth look." Then I hazarded the remark that Rogers' best short poems were as good as Moore's. "No," said Tennyson, "Rogers is not as good as Moore. Moore had a wilder fancy, but still hardly anything that Moore wrote is altogether what it should be." He gave as an instance: "She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps." He also quoted with mingled merriment and contempt a passage or two of Little's poems, and said "How fat that is!" meaning how material, and how fleshly. He did this with remarkable finesse of expression. Tennyson exceedingly admired "Oft in the still night." I suggested that Byron's "Isles of Greece" might have been admitted into the *Golden Treasury*: he also thought so, but he supposed that the editor had discovered some defect in it, of which he (Tennyson) was not aware—but he had not read it for years. He then repeated the first stanza, and said, "That's very fine, but Thackeray tells me that Samian wine is very wretched stuff."

We talked of Rogers, and of 22 St. James' Place. I told him that one morning my father had taken me, when quite a boy, to see the poet-wit: he was an ugly little man, a wrinkled Mæcenas, in a brown coat. Henry Luttrell happened to be there, also in a brown coat. He was also little and ugly, and as my father had a little brown coat too, I suppose there were three of them. Rogers was calm and kind; he showed me a china coffee cup which had belonged to General Wash-

ington, who he knew had been a friend of my maternal grandfather. Neither then nor afterwards did I detect in him any of that quiet venom which his particular friends seemed so anxious to discover in him.

All this talk interested Tennyson ; he said : "When I first knew Rogers, he more than once asked me to go and see him ; for a long time I refused, but at last I went, and was fully repaid. I knew him well, and often breakfasted with him, and spent long half days in his society." He said he was once walking down Bond Street with Rogers, and they met a hearse, and Rogers said, in his very quiet, deliberate and slightly sardonic tones : "You know they call me a *tête morte* ; the other day I was walking out of St. James' Place, and I saw three hearses turning in there, and I said to myself, 'perhaps these hearses are coming for *me*,' and I kept out of the way for the whole day, and when I returned at night, I found that St. James' Place had been full of hearses—a trick of that rascal Theodore Hook's."

Tennyson went on to say that perhaps some of Rogers' shorter poems would last longer than the ambitious efforts of more important writers. Rogers used often to read to him passages of his writings, and to consult him about the notes to his *Italy*. "He liked me," Tennyson said, "and thought that perhaps I might be the coming poet, and might help to hand his name down to future ages. One day we were walking arm in arm, and I spoke of what is called Immortality and remarked how few writers could be sure of it. Upon this, Rogers squeezed my arm and said : 'I am sure of it.' " Tennyson was fond of Rogers and told me this with no unamiable intention, but, on the contrary, in all kindness and good faith. Most poets have felt at times as Rogers felt on this occasion, but with this difference, that they had not an Immortal's arm to squeeze.



After these conversations, he would often end with "Rogers was a kindly old man, excepting when he was bilious"; now, the same might have been said of Bede, the Venerable Saint.

Tennyson was greatly impressed by the deadly-earnest and savagery, and let me say *sadness*, of Swift's *Legion Club*. He has more than once read it to me; on the last occasion, Houghton and George Venables, two great friends (than whom none were more warmly regarded by the circle that met fitfully at Farringford and Aldworth), were present, and they were also impressed by it.

Tennyson admired Samuel Johnson's grave earnestness, and said that certain of his couplets, for these qualities and for their "high moral tone," were not surpassed in English satire. However, he ventured to make merry over :

"Let observation, with extensive view,  
Survey mankind, from China to Peru."

"Why did he not say 'Let observation, with extended observation, observe extensively'?"

He spoke of Mr. Ruskin and the *Pathetic Fallacy*. He thought Wordsworth was justified in saying that "The moon looked round her with delight when the heavens were bare," but that the late Alexander Smith, "a poet of considerable promise," went too far when he spoke of "the wave, a bride wooing the shore." He said the same of Kingsley, that "the cruel, crawling wave" was too much like a live creature.

Tennyson liked Jonson's "It is not growing like a tree," and Marvell's "To a Prude," "but," he added, "I can't read Ben Jonson, especially his comedies. To me he appears to move in a wide sea of glue." I said, "Do you like Goldsmith's 'When lovely woman stoops

to folly'?" And he replied: "I love it." He also greatly praised the *Vicar of Wakefield*.

He told me that he was moved to write "Tears, idle Tears" at Tintern Abbey; and that it was not real woe, as some people might suppose; "it was rather the yearning that young people occasionally experience for that which seems to have passed away from them for ever." That in him it was strongest when he was quite a youth. He said, "Old Carlyle, who is never moved by poetry, once quoted those lines of mine, while we were out walking." Carlyle had written to him in praise of "Ulysses," and to his regret he had lost the letter.<sup>1</sup> He valued Carlyle's opinion.

Tennyson said that the "Bugle Song" was written at Killarney, and "O Swallow, Swallow," was first composed in rhyme. He had been told that

Come down, O Maid, from yonder mountain  
height—

to    Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
      The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
      And murmuring of innumerable bees,

was as felicitous as Theocritus.

He spoke of "The Brook," and the pauses in that passage "'Run Katie!' Katie never ran \* \* \* blushing for a boon," and of the whole spirit of the poem, as not having been appreciated; and he said the same of some of his similes, such as in "Vivien" the blood of Merlin likened to an opal, and in "Enid" the serpent compared to a worm dragging the leaf under the soil.

Tennyson spoke to me several times, almost with horror, of the way people who have won fame are likely to be maligned after their death. I have an old

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. p. 275.

commonplace book, into which, with many other scraps of prose and verse, I had copied an epigram by Thomas Hood. It runs as follows :

A joke. “ What is a modern poet’s fate ?  
           To write his thoughts upon a slate ;  
           The critic spits on what is done,  
           *Gives it a wipe*—and all is gone.”  
   T. HOOD.

This quatrain amused Tennyson, and he said : “ It is a good joke, and now I’ll write you a *grave truth*.” Which he did as follows, adding the words “ a joke ” by the side of Hood’s lines.

A truth.      While I live, the owls !  
                   When I die, the GHOULS !!!

In his dedication of the “ Idylls ” to the Prince Consort at line 15, after the words, “ We know him now : all narrow jealousies,” he originally had said :

The fume and babble of a petulant hour.

He left out this line when the passage was published. I have many such notes by him.

In the first issue of “ The Princess,” edition 1875, King & Co., vol. iv. p. 120, line 8 runs thus :

And follow’d up by a hundred hairy does.

Was not this unkind of the printer ? I was with the unlucky author when the proof reached him. He gazed at it with horror and gave a very prolonged and remarkable groan, which not having been set to music, I cannot do justice to here.

It was exceedingly sultry at the falls of Schaffhausen. These were very impressive, but to escape the sun we

were glad to take refuge in a shed pervaded by an atrocious odour of decayed cheeses, or some such horror. "This is my usual luck," says Tennyson, "I never go to see anything which is very impressive, without encountering something mean or repulsive. Now, this sublime cataract, and this disgusting stench, will for ever dwell together in my memory." He went on to say that the unpleasant odours of London were as offensive as those of Paris, but that the latter were more pungent, piercing like the point of a lance; and then he added with grave emphasis, "It is an age of lies, and also an age of stinks."

Grindelwald, Aigle, 26th June.<sup>1</sup> To-day we bought two large carved wood bears, for which, after breaking a good deal of French over the dealer, we agreed that Tennyson should pay one hundred francs. These bears are now in the entrance hall at Aldworth, keeping watch and ward, quite ready to welcome the arriving guest with a friendly hug.

In the evening we played battledore and shuttlecock in the pension attached to the *Aigle*. He said that he had once kept up two thousand. This *Aigle* is a huge hungry-looking caravansary, with curiously uncomfortable beds. Tennyson's, especially, had none of the caressing and consenting softness of that to which he had been accustomed; suggestive of anything but sleep, it was hard and lumpy, and of the pronounced German type—the kind of bed that Gray, the poet, must have had in his mind's eye when he said :

"That hush'd in grim repose, expects its ev'ning prey."

Just now the *Aigle* would be entirely deserted, but

<sup>1</sup> F. Locker-Lampson wrote to F. T. Palgrave, June 24th, 1869 : "I think A. T. is happy and quite well. He walks excellently, and is ready for a walk now (2 o'clock), having been at it since 8 A.M."

for ourselves and a young, lately-married and superlatively happy couple. This pair much interest my poet. We sit opposite to them at breakfast and again at dinner, at the extreme end of a vast expanse of bare, cold tablecloth. They nestle close to each other like love-birds on one perch, that perch being a short one. She is a bouncing *blonde*, frankly blue in her eyes, and there is a coquetry, uncalculated or calculated, in her dimples, her boots and her parasol; she has also an exasperating little hat and feather. Sad to say, none of these allurements seem lost on my gifted companion. As often as she addresses her swain, she gazes with innocent rapture into his mild eyes, and every now and again, as if asserting her right of possession, with sympathetic fingers arranges and re-arranges the bow of his cravat, and then sends a pretty appealing glance across the table in our direction. These lovers take pastoral walks together, and are often to be met in twilight intervals, steeped in honeymoonshine. On such occasions they deem it expedient to affect an exquisite confusion.

Excepting for this, and you will allow this is a large exception, our lovers may not be specially attractive, but surely they are beautiful in their *abandon*, loving and being loved. Thanks to them the prosaic *Aigle* is an Arcadian hostelry, with green retreats and winding paths of dalliance, lawns, rocks and leafy trees.

Was there a tree that did not know  
The love betwixt those two?

The glacier nearest to the hotel is much discoloured by the *débris* from the mountain. Tennyson's farewell words were: "That glacier is a filthy thing; it looks as if a thousand London seasons had passed over it." Such was our retrospect of Grindelwald.

1st July. To-day at Giessbach he said that if he had been one of the "Wise Men of Greece," and had been asked for a *dictum*, he would have given "Every man imputes himself," meaning that a man, unless he is very sane indeed, in judging of others, imputes motives, etc. which move himself. "No man can see further than his moral eyes will allow him."

He has been talking of Lord Bacon. He says that certain passages of his writings, their pregnant eloquence and vivid completeness, lifted him more than those of almost any writer. We happened to see a little fountain in the hotel, which danced a wisp; he stopped, looked at it attentively, and said: "It is a pretty toy, it would have pleased Bacon."

Lucerne, 2nd July. To-day we hired a boat and two men, and had a row on the lake. As we returned, the wind rose, the men pulled well, but they tired, so Tennyson bent to an oar. He rowed very pluckily for half-an-hour, till Mr. Eardly our travelling companion relieved him. Then came my turn. When we got back to the hotel, the people said that the wind had risen so much that they had been watching us with anxiety.

A few days before, on the Wengern Alp, we came across a man who blew a loud blast through a cow's horn, which produced a varied and prodigiously prolonged echo. Tennyson said: "You'll have to pay half a franc for that noise. The man subsists on a ghost of a sound."

Hôtel d'Angleterre, Strasbourg, 3rd July. Tennyson does not like his eggs too lightly cooked. To-day at breakfast there was a pretty waitress, and he sent his eggs to be more boiled, and then, in the damsel's native tongue, expostulated with her as to the softness of her eggs and the apparent hardness of her heart. It was

very pleasant to hear his grave but gallant remonstrance and her merry laugh. He is delightful.

Rheims, *5th July*. We have just returned from visiting the Cathedral and the Church of St. Remi (one of the most remarkable churches in Europe). As we passed through the immense wide-open door of the cathedral, which seemed to spread its arms to receive all who wished to enter, Tennyson said<sup>1</sup>: "How grand it must have been, when the lower windows were all filled with stained glass, to have looked into the divine twilight, and gazed up at that huge window, glowing like jewels sprinkled in gloom! What a mystery is the Christian religion! It requires an act of Faith to believe and accept it."

We arrived in Paris on 7th July. On the 10th we breakfasted with Gustave Doré, the painter, at the Moulin Rouge. His enormous studio was in the Rue St. Dominic. We were much pleased with the good Doré. Although Tennyson had not been entirely satisfied with the publication of the folio edition of the "Idylls," which Doré illustrated, the two met and parted with perfect cordiality.

One afternoon I was packing Tennyson's portmanteau, packing for both of us, as he was suffering from gout. The weather was so hot that we had taken off our coats, he, the while, being seated on the edge of his bed, smoking his pipe.

As the packing was almost completed, and it was near the hour of departure, I cleverly hoisted him into his coat, and bade him be easy; however, he complained that the garment was tight, and that he would rather wear his other coat, his older and bigger coat. He would much prefer his bigger one. As the time

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson had already visited most of the cathedrals in England and France.

was getting on, and as I did not covet the labour of unpacking and repacking, I insisted that the coat he already had on did as well as possible, infinitely better than the older one.

"Now, be aisy," says I, "or if you can't be aisy, be as aisy as you can."

This quenched my poet; he returned to his pipe. He was plaintive, but he submitted. When I had quite finished and looked round for my own coat, I found that I had not only packed up both of Tennyson's, but that I had squeezed him into mine, my comparatively little coat. At last when my blunder was set right and when all was comfortably arranged, the dear fellow volunteered something very kind about the trouble I took for him. I assured him it was no trouble, quite the contrary. He was silent for a while and then he said: "Locker, I think you have a physical pleasure in packing."

*Later in London.* This morning we were at the marriage of Miss Louisa Simeon to Mr. Richard Ward. She was the daughter of our old friend, Sir John Simeon, one of the best beloved by Tennyson and me of all Tennyson's circle. The youngest of the bridesmaids was a five-years-old sister, and as she knelt before us in sweet unconscious reverence, she displayed the soles of her little white shoes. These, and her little face and her general adornment were altogether very engaging, and Tennyson whispered to me: "She and her shoes remind me of one of your poems."

I once met Tennyson at dinner at the Conservative Club, in company with Dicky Doyle, Sir J. Emerson Tennent, Sir Arthur Buller (Charles Buller's brother) and others whom I have forgotten. Tennyson read "Maud" to us and was very gay and companionable.

After dinner one or two of the younger spirits got



round him, and pelted him with all sorts of questions, some highly indiscreet, all of which he listened to most benignantly; at last our host, Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell, cut in with: "Mr. Tennyson, which do you consider the greatest poet, Browning or Blank?" On this Tennyson withdrew his pipe from his lips, straightened himself in his chair, and said emphatically: "Blank, as compared with Browning, is as the dung beneath my feet." He afterwards expressed regret that he had spoken so freely. You see, dear reader, that in telling this story, I have not betrayed my friend.

In 1870, my distinguished friend, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, expressed a warm and very laudable desire to make Tennyson's acquaintance. At that time the Laureate was confined with gout to his room, on a fourth floor in Albert Mansions, and the gartered statesman, often a martyr to the same malady, was a good deal past eighty. However, Lord Stratford was not only a hero, but he was also a hero-worshipper, and, like his great kinsman, was no mean poet; so he gallantly and gaily breasted the staircase. The introduction was happily accomplished, the visit satisfactorily paid, and I thought that the bearing of these two remarkable and very striking-looking men was worthy of their high reputations, and that it was characteristic of both.

I do not think anything specially to be remembered was said, unless when Lord Stratford described being at Lord's Cricket Club, I suppose the Dorset Square ground, and seeing a big Harrow boy, bat in hand, limp back to the pavilion having just lost his wicket, and evidently not over-pleased. This moody-looking boy was Lord Byron.

Lord Stratford added that he afterwards met Lord Byron at John Murray's, and then at Constantinople, and that on each occasion Byron talked a great deal,

and very brightly, but that a mocking spirit ran through his conversation. However, he did not appear to have said anything that had impressed Lord Stratford, or lingered in his memory. "Byron had a fine head, eyes and hair, but the expression of the lower part of his face was not agreeable." Perhaps Lord Byron, on the sneering side of his nature, was not the sort of man greatly to interest Lord Stratford.

Tennyson says that as a boy he had a great thirst to be a poet, and to be a *popular* poet. He would rove through the fields composing hundreds of couplets, and shouting them to the skies; but that now he is inclined to think popularity is a bastard fame, which sometimes goes with the more real thing, but is independent of and somewhat antagonistic to it. He appears to shrink from his own popularity. He maintains that the artist should spare no pains, that he should do his very best for the sake of his art, and for *that* only.

Balzac's remark that "*Dans tout homme de génie il y a un enfant*" may find its illustration in Tennyson. He is the only grown up human being that I know of, who habitually thinks aloud. His humour is of the driest, it is admirable. Did anybody ever make one laugh more heartily than Alfred Tennyson? He tells a story excellently, and has a catching laugh. There are people who laugh because they are shy or disconcerted, or for lack of ideas, or to bridge over some conversational gap or obstruction: only a few because they are happy or amused or perhaps triumphant. Tennyson has an entirely natural and a very kindly laugh.

I and mine have a warm regard for Tennyson. He has been very kind to Mrs. Locker and me. The more we see of him the more we appreciate his singular charm, which has never deserted him in this world,

and which I trust will be secured to him in the next. His friendship has been and still is one of the solaces of my life.

It is easy to criticize a great man, it is not so easy to estimate him, and certainly it is not for me to attempt it; however, I may say that Tennyson, as a poet, has mental and moral gifts, most rare in the high quality of their separate excellence, and marvellous in the harmony of their combination. "The Muse may give thee, but the gods must guide," and this the gods have done. So future generations will not suffer his happiest poems, and there are many such, to die. These poems will remain the highest expression of the imaginative mind of his epoch, and he will continue to shine, a beautiful and serene star, in the poetical heavens.

On again reading this paper of mine, I am painfully conscious of its inadequacy. Lady Tennyson's name is not even mentioned, but there is little need. Is not there a Book where all noble actions are recorded? I spare her my praise.

*My mother's journal.—Mr. Fox, Aldworth, Arthur Hallam, Miss Thackeray*

After the journey, Mr. Locker gave us a drawing by Guercino, and a print by Marc Antonio of Mary standing over the dead body of Christ.

My father wrote to Mr. Locker :

ALDWORTH, *August 6th*, 1869.

MY DEAR LOCKER,

I am rather shocked at receiving your magnificent M. Antonio and Guercino : I feel

myself (as compared with you, who know so much more of these matters) unworthy to be the possessor, at least blameworthy in accepting them. Nevertheless I do accept them, and value them not only as they are beautiful, but as memorials of your friendship.

We have got into our new house, which is very charming; nothing in it pleases me more than the bath, a perennial stream which falls thro' the house, and where I take three baths a day.

I hope presently, when we get things a little arranged, you will come and see us.

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

And to the Duke of Argyll :

ALDWORTH, *Aug. 17th*, 1869.

MY DEAR DUKE,

I apologise in the first place for troubling you with this letter rather than Gladstone, but I wrote to him lately in behalf of another petitioner, and am loth to intrude on him again so soon: moreover I thought that, being yourself a geologist, you were more likely to be interested in the writer of the letter. However that may be, Mr. Fox is a very worthy man, and poor, and has been for many years curate at Brixton near me in the Isle of Wight, whose whole delight, always and excepting that which he takes in the discharge of his clerical duties, lies in exploring on our coast; and it

would break his heart I believe to be separated from the localities of his favourite study. If the government would give him this living, they would make him happy for life : for the worth and value of his contributions to geology, Owen will answer.

I will say no more, and what I have said comes I fear too late : for I have been living here in my new house near Haslemere, to which as yet there is no post, and all my letters arrive irregularly, and so his was delayed in reaching me : still, if the living be not already promised, I should be grateful if you could help him to it.

I do not know where you are at present, but I direct this to Inveraray.

With best remembrances to your Duchess,  
Believe me always yours,  
A. TENNYSON.

*Sept. 13th.* At night a fearful clap of thunder. We seemed in the very heart of the storm. A. said he did not think that he had "ever seen anything more sublime than the great plain (of Sussex beneath us), covered with moving mist, in the dim twilight, and bellowing from end to end with thunder :

With sullen thunders to and fro  
That to a dreary distance go."

*Sept. 29th and 30th.* Read the "Idylls" thro' in their proper sequence during these months, also Tom Hughes' *Alfred the Great*, Pressensé's *Life of Christ*, Martineau's *Endeavours after a Christian Life*, and Lecky's *European Morals*.

*Oct. 7th.* We laid the first turf of our [Aldworth] lawn. All the turf is brought from our Farringford Down.

He gave me his beginning of "Beaumains" ["Sir Gareth"] to read (written, as was said jokingly, to "describe a pattern youth for his boys").

He "would like the blank shields on his mantel-piece to be emblazoned with devices to represent the great modern poets, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Wordsworth."

*Nov. 1st.* A. and I talked a long talk together, sitting over the fire in our room at night. We were very busy about the new volume of poems ("The Holy Grail").

Dr. Martineau came. He struck us as having a subtle and wonderful mind: he is strong, mournful and tender-looking, "a noble gentleman."

A. went to London. Tilly [Matilda Tennyson] in the evening told me how, on an autumn evening at Somersby, just before Arthur Hallam's death, she and her sister Mary saw a tall figure, clothed from head to foot in white, and they followed it down the lane, and saw it pass thro' the hedge where there was no gap: and how she was so awed that on reaching home she burst into tears. She then related how, being at Spilsby for her dancing lessons, she had brought home the letters, and one among them from Clevedon. This was addressed to A. She gave it to him, as he sat at dinner, and went to take off her bonnet, and she heard afterwards that he had suddenly left the table, and that poor Emily was then summoned to him to have the terrible news broken to her.

Then Tilly talked of Arthur Hallam's goodness to the younger children; how she and they "roared" when he went away with A. and Charlie to college;

and said that Arthur Hallam was so delightful, that they were all in love with him from the first, when they saw him on the lawn, where he and A. were playing with "Billy," the monkey. She added that he always begged that the children might be of any pleasure-party that was made : but that A. was kindest of all to the children, often taking them on his knee, and telling them ghost-stories and other stories of his own invention.

A. wrote to me that he thought of giving up "The Lover's Tale," and only publishing "The Golden Supper" with a preface.

Dec. 11th. Farringford. A. read me some of Maurice's *Social Morals* ; "a noble book" it seemed to me, as A. called it. He wrote to Z. expressing the hope that Cabinet Ministers would think how to make England and her colonies one, body and soul, instead of casting the colonies off : and he continued—"I cannot but feel that those who think otherwise must be blind to our real interest, and our high calling."

Throughout these years we saw a great deal of Mr. and Mrs. Cameron, who had bought a house near Freshwater Bay. My father described him as "a philosopher with his beard dipt in moonlight." Not only was he an excellent classical scholar, but while in the East, where he lived for many years, he had codified the laws of Ceylon. Mrs. Cameron was one of the most benevolent of human beings, always thinking of something for the good or pleasure of others. Her photographs are well-known. She herself took an absorbing interest in making them.

Writing to Mr. Digby, she gives an account of the life at Freshwater.<sup>1</sup>

After speaking of the party of young people assembled at Freshwater ; of Annie Thackeray as the queen of all hearts, of her cousins the Miss Ritchies, like Gainsboroughs to look at, one sister "singing perfectly, the other playing as perfectly," both as if inspired ; and after telling of the dances and the walks, "Alfred taking walks of several miles daily," and of the silent and deep enjoyment of Henry Taylor, "my peculiar friend,"—Mrs. Cameron adds : "Then we have feasts of intellect. Sometimes we dine at Farringford, sometimes Farringford dines here."

One evening she describes, when Annie Thackeray, and the Miss Prinseps, Alfred Tennyson, and Henry Taylor, were dining at her house. "We dined at 7 and only got up from dinner at 11. All this while the most brilliant conversation. The whole range of poetry comprised, every immortal poet brought to life, and living again in the glowing and wise breath of Alfred Tennyson, in the quotations from Henry Taylor's rich and faithful memory. Each one recited favourite passages from Beaumont and Fletcher, favourite sonnets of Shakespeare's, all that was finest in my adored Wordsworth, and the god of poetic fire, Milton. They were like two brilliant fencers crossing their rapiers, or flashing their foils, giving and evading clean thrusts."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 343, for Freshwater Society.



From 1869 to 1880 my brother, myself and the younger members of the Cameron family spent many of our evenings during the Christmas and Easter holidays in Mrs. Cameron's little theatre. Here we acted plays by Sheridan, Gilbert, Robertson and Tom Taylor, and my father was seldom absent, for he loved the stage. He was a careful critic and never missed a point. As one of the actors said of him : " Criticism only came when sought, and seldom then ; but, if conceded at all, he had the faculty of putting in a few forcible phrases the warmth of his approval, or the *douche* of his disapproval, as I never heard them put."

Miss Emily Ritchie writes of her first visit at this time :

The first day [in 1869] I ever saw Alfred Tennyson he was walking on the downs at Freshwater. Annie Thackeray was with him and she introduced me and made me walk on his other side.

He swooped down the hillside, his large black cloak flying in the wind, and his massive tread seeming to carry him at an astonishing pace. After that, a large party of us led by Mrs. Cameron spent the evening at Farringford ; the fact of being in so august a presence seems to have obliterated the actual memory of what he said ; but I remember how, in the course of the evening, a sudden transformation took place in all our appearances, which gave us assurance from an unexpected quarter. One of the subjects which came up in the course of conversation was the fashion for young ladies of wearing

their hair. He said the most becoming fashion was to wear it flowing, without being put up at all, and wished that we would let ours hang down our backs. He suggested our trying the effect at once.

We all therefore sat round the dessert table with our hair down, and for the rest of the evening he approved of us very much, and said he wished the Empress Eugénie would set the fashion.

What he especially disliked was seeing the whole ear, as "So few women have specially small, well-shaped ears to show."

Some time after this I spent three nights at Farringford, and on one of them a dance took place at Mrs. Cameron's, to which I went, and my return from it was memorable. It was two in the morning, and I came back expecting to be let in by the manservant, but it was he himself who opened the door, and the invitation to come up to his den, where he was still smoking, took me aback. He led me up the winding stairs to his study (a much smaller and less stately one than the present study), and talked delightfully whilst he finished his pipe. What I chiefly remember was the way in which he told me "never to get spoilt by the world."

His talk ranged over every possible subject, from the most trivial thing of the passing moment, to which he somehow gave raciness and importance, to the greatest heights of thought and speculation. The unexpected was one of the most striking fascinations of his company, the utter child-like simplicity of his great nature revealed itself in this.

His judgments of men were wonderfully kindly. He had a refreshing hatred of the commonplaces of intercourse, and a mistrust of what he called the "humbug of society," which made him dread ever attending anything in the shape of a party : but to visitors in

his own house he showed ideal hospitality, giving his friends a feeling that they had come to a home indeed, bestowing *himself* upon them in a way which the most genial of the earth alone understand.

He used the fewest words I ever heard any one use to express his ideas, or to recount an experience, or to tell an anecdote (always a large element in his talk), but each word was the right one, and his use of the English language was unlike anybody else's for force and dignity.

The strongest vein of common sense characterised his talk, and he disliked exaggeration of all sorts.

Mrs. Cameron's wildly romantic ideas and performances used to call forth growls of amused dissatisfaction from him, and he hated the adulatory attitude of some people. Praise, which he felt due, he accepted as a matter of course, being himself the most censorious critic of his work. At the same time he was very sensitive to any critical opinion, so sensitive that I have heard him say, all the praise he had ever received didn't outweigh for the moment a spiteful and unkindly criticism, even though the criticism (he once added) was directed against the straightness of his toe-nail.

Amongst the experiences of intercourse with him, nothing was more memorable than to hear him read his poetry. The roll of his great voice acted sometimes almost like an incantation, so that when it was a new poem he was reading, the power of realizing its actual nature was subordinated to the wonder at the sound of the tones. Sometimes, as in "The Passing of Arthur," it was a long chant, in which the expression lay chiefly in the value given to each syllable, sometimes a swell of sound like an organ's; often came tones of infinite pathos, delicate and tender, then others of mighty volume and passionate strength.

## UNFINISHED POEM OF THIS PERIOD

*Reticence*

Not to Silence would I build  
A temple in her naked field ;  
Not to her would raise a shrine :  
She no goddess is of mine ;  
But to one of finer sense,  
Her half sister, Reticence.

Latest of her worshippers,  
I would shrine her in my verse !  
Not like Silence shall she stand,  
Finger-lipt, but with right hand  
Moving toward her lip, and there  
Hovering, thoughtful, poised in air.  
Her garment slips, the left hand holds  
Her<sup>1</sup> up-gather'd garment folds,  
And veils a breast more fair to me  
Than aught of Anadyomené !  
Near the shrine, but half in sun,  
I would have a river run,  
Such as never overflows  
With flush of rain, or molten snows,  
Often shallow, pierced with light,  
Often deep beyond the sight,

<sup>1</sup> The two *Her's* coming together vexed him and he threw the poem aside—unfinished—and forgot all about it.

Here and there about the lawn  
 Wholly mute, but ever drawn  
 Under either grassy brink  
 In many a silver loop and link  
 Variously from its far spring,  
 With long tracts of murmuring,  
 Partly river, partly brook,  
 Which in one delicious nook,  
 Where the doubtful shadows play,  
 Lightly lispings, breaks away ;  
 Thence, across the summit hurl'd,  
 Showers in a whisper o'er the world.

## CHAPTER IV

### "THE HOLY GRAIL," 1869, AND MY MOTHER'S JOURNAL, 1870-1872

TRINITY COLLEGE (Cambridge), his old College, had this year made my father an Honorary Fellow; and it was from Cambridge men in particular that he received commendations of his "Holy Grail." Among others Maurice wrote:

CAMBRIDGE, *Dec. 18th*, 1869.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I did not give myself credit for so much of Diomedean craft in changing brass armour for golden. But if I can persuade any who listened to me to seek for the "Holy Grail" and to increase the "Arthur" standard of character above any Greek one, my aim will be accomplished and I shall thankfully own how much more you have contributed to it than we lecturers and parsons can.

Pray remember me affectionately to Mrs. Tennyson as well as to my godson and Lionel. I had hoped we might have seen you this winter in the Isle of Wight, but we have been urged to try Torquay and have taken a house there for two months.

Believe me very truly yours,

F. D. MAURICE.

About “The Holy Grail” my father said to me : “ At twenty-four I meant to write an epic or a drama of King Arthur ; and I thought that I should take twenty years about the work. They will now say that I have been forty years about it. ‘The Holy Grail’ is one of the most imaginative of my poems. I have expressed there my strong feeling as to the Reality of the Unseen. The end, when the king speaks of his work and of his visions, is intended to be the summing up of all in the highest note by the highest of human men. These three lines in Arthur’s speech are the (spiritually) central lines of the Idylls :

In moments when he feels he cannot die,  
And knows himself no vision to himself,  
Nor the High God a vision.

The general English view of God is as of an immeasurable clergyman ; and some mistake the devil for God.”

He spoke again to us with deep feeling about this passage, in January 1869 : ‘ Yes, it is true ; there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual *is* the real : it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence, I could believe you ; but you never, never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal Reality, and that

the Spiritual is not the only true and real part of me." These words he spoke with such passionate earnestness that a solemn silence fell on us as he left the room.<sup>1</sup>

The new volume contained besides "The Holy Grail," "Lucretius,"<sup>2</sup> "The Coming of Arthur," "Pelleas and Ettarre," "The Passing of Arthur," "Northern Farmer (New Style)," "The Golden Supper," "The Victim," "Wages," "The Higher Pantheism," "Flower in the crannied wall."

After the publication of this book his fame in America grew extraordinarily, and every post brought him innumerable American letters.

One little incident pleased him much. A literary society at Philadelphia called itself after him "The Tennyson Society," and asked him for a motto. He sent this answer :

*Sept. 9th, 1869.*

DEAR SIR,

You have done me honour in associating my name with your institution, and you have my hearty good wishes for its success. Will the following Welsh motto be of any service to you? I have it in encaustic tiles on the pavement of my entrance hall : "Y Gwir yn erbyn y byd" (The truth against the world). A

<sup>1</sup> I have taken the words of this paragraph from Mrs. Bradley's diary written at the time : I remember the scene well.

<sup>2</sup> Munro, the great Lucretian, wrote praising "Lucretius," and saying the poem was perfect but for one word, "neat-herd."



very old British apophthegm, and I think a noble one, and which may serve your purpose either in Welsh or English. Your letter arrived when I was away from England, or would have been earlier answered.

Believe me yours truly,  
A. TENNYSON.

When certain adverse critics discovered that throughout all the new “Idylls of the King” there was a great moral significance, he was attacked with the cry of “Art for Art’s sake.” After reading one of these attacks he reeled off this epigram :

*Art for Art’s sake*  
(*instead of Art for Art—and—Man’s sake*)<sup>1</sup>

Art for Art’s sake ! Hail, truest Lord of Hell !  
Hail Genius, Master of the Moral Will !  
“The filthiest of all paintings painted well  
Is mightier than the purest painted ill !”  
Yes, mightier than the purest painted well,  
So prone are we toward the broad way to Hell.

These lines in a measure expressed his strong and sorrowful conviction, that the English were beginning to forget what was, in Voltaire’s words, the glory of English literature—“No

<sup>1</sup> He quoted George Sand : “L’art pour art est un vain mot : l’art pour le vrai, l’art pour le beau et le bon, voilà la religion que je cherche.”

nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation."

Of all the "Idylls of the King" "The Holy Grail" seems to me to express most my father's highest self. Perhaps this is because I saw him, in the writing of this poem more than in the writing of any other, with that far away rapt look on his face, which he had whenever he worked at a story that touched him greatly, or because I vividly recall the *inspired* way in which he chanted to us the different parts of the poem as they were composed.<sup>1</sup>

1870

At the beginning of the new year the Bradleys again visited us.

My father was extraordinarily happy now that he felt that his great work of the Epic of Arthur was nearing its completion: and it impressed the Bradleys that, in spite of vexatious publishing matters, he was marvellously calm and genial.

*January 11th.* Mrs. Bradley wrote:

Both at dinner and afterwards at the "Round Table" (where we have dessert in the drawing-room) Mr.

<sup>1</sup> An able review of the four first published "Idylls" (*Ed. Rev.* 1859), written by Coventry Patmore, remarks (what is eminently true of "The Holy Grail") that "Since the definite formation of the English language no poetry has been written with so small an admixture of Latin as the 'Idylls of the King,' and what will sound still stranger in the ears of those who have been in the habit of regarding the Latin element as essential to the dignity of poetry, no language has surpassed in epic dignity the English of these poems."

Tennyson talked a great deal, unusually much at dinner, when he is oftenest rather silent. I ventured to ask him, “Did he know that ‘gleam’ was an old Lincolnshire word used formerly in the Fens for the cry of the curlew?” alluding to the line in “Locksley Hall,” “dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall.” “I never heard it,” he said, “I wish I had.” He thought it curious and interesting, explained that the passage in question “meant nothing more than to express the flying gleams of light across a dreary moorland, when looking at it under peculiarly dreary circumstances. ‘Curlews’ only a feature in the scene; but an unfortunate misprint, merely the omission of a comma, had given rise to very various interpretations of the passage.” A great many were quoted. He wished he had used the word “sweeping” instead of “flying,” as it would have been more explicit. He read aloud “The Holy Grail.”

*Jan. 13th.* He said: “The first poetry that moved me was my own at five years old. When I was eight, I remember making a line I thought grander than Campbell, or Byron, or Scott. I rolled it out, it was this: ‘With slaughterous sons of thunder rolled the flood’—great nonsense of course, but I thought it fine.” He was very jovial.

Talked a little of the stir being made just now about “Women’s Rights.” The account of some meeting on the subject in America amused him. He said that all the great men that had ever lived were made out as sort of beasts with a view to exalt women. “You know,” he added, “that I think women much better (morally) than we are.”

My father sent this answer to a letter from James Spedding approving of “The Holy Grail”:

FARRINGFORD, *Jan. 19th*, 1870.

MY DEAR JAMES,

Send the box, please, not without your new volume hither. I shall be grateful for both. I am glad that you find anything to approve of in the "H. G." I have not yet finished the Arthurian legends, otherwise I might consider your Job<sup>1</sup> theme. Strange that I quite forgot our conversation thereupon. Where is Westbourne Terrace? If I had ever clearly made out I should assuredly have called. I have often when in town past by the old 60, the "vedovo sito," with a groan, thinking of you as no longer the comeatable, runupableto, smokeablewith J. S. of old, but as a family man, far in the west, sitting cigarless among many nieces, clean and forlorn, but I hope to see you somewhere in '70, for I have taken chambers in Victoria Street for three years, though they are not yet furnished.

Where is the difficulty of that line in the "Flower"? It is rather rough certainly, but, had you followed the clue of "little flower" in the preceding line, you would not have stumbled over this, which is accentual anapæst,

What you are, root and all :  
rough—doubtless.

Believe me yours ever,  
A. TENNYSON.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Spedding said he wanted a "Modern Job" by Tennyson.

## LETTER FROM FITZGERALD 1870

Edward FitzGerald also wrote about "The Holy Grail" :

WOODBRIDGE, Jan. 1870.

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,

I bought your vol. [the "Holy Grail"] at Lowestoft; and, when I returned home here for Xmas, found a copy from your new publisher. As he sent it I suppose at your orders, I write about it what I might say to you were we together over a pipe, instead of so far asunder.

The whole myth of Arthur's Round Table Dynasty in Britain presents itself before me with a sort of cloudy, Stonehenge grandeur. I am not sure if the old knights' adventures do not tell upon me better, touched in some lyrical way (like your own "Lady of Shalott") than when elaborated into epic form. I never could care for Spenser, Tasso, or even Ariosto, whose epic has a ballad ring about it. But then I never could care much for the old prose Romances either, except *Don Quixote*. So, as this was always the case with me, I suppose my brain is wanting in this bit of its dissected map.

Anyhow, Alfred, while I feel how pure, noble and holy your work is, and whole phrases, lines and sentences of it will abide with me, and, I am sure, with men after me, I read on till the "Lincolnshire Farmer" drew tears to my eyes. I was got back to the substantial rough-spun Nature I knew; and the old brute, invested by you with the solemn humour of Humanity, like Shakespeare's *Shallow*, became a more pathetic phenomenon than the knights who revisit the world in your other verse. There! I can't help it, and have made a clean breast; and you need only laugh at one more of "old Fitz's crotchets," which I daresay you

anticipated. To compare X— to my own "paltry Poet," is, I say, to compare an old Jew's Curiosity Shop with the Phidian Marbles. They talk of "metaphysical depth and subtlety," pray is there none in "The Palace of Art," "The Vision of Sin" (which last touches on the limit of disgust without ever falling in), "Locksley Hall" also, with some little passion, I think! only that all these being clear to the bottom, as well as beautiful, do not seem to cockney eyes so deep as muddy waters? I suppose you are at Farringford with your boys for the holidays. Let me wish you all a Happy New Year, and believe me your faithful old crotchety Retainer,

E. F. G.

P.S. I also think I shall one day send you my little piece of knightlihood (*Euphranor*), of which Cowell told me you liked parts, and from which (in consequence) I have cut out what seems to me the most disagreeable part, leaving much behind, together with what still seems to me pretty. I had not looked at it for 15 years till Cowell told me what you said; and that made me cut out, and insert some pages.

*January 25th.* The Ritchies and Annie Thackeray dined with us.

My father said to them: "I don't find it difficult to believe in the Infinity of Worlds." Then, after trying to make us all realize the rate at which the earth whirls through space, and that every two days the solar system has rushed one million miles towards a certain point in the constellation of Hercules, and that light takes millions of years to travel from some of the

stars, the light of which has not yet reached us, and other astronomical sublimities—he observed, “From the starry spheres to think of the airs given themselves by county families in ball-rooms! One lady I remember early in the century in Lincolnshire, drawing herself up on hearing that the daughters of a neighbouring family were taking lessons in drawing and singing, and saying, ‘My daughters don’t learn drawing.’” He continued: “Miss Austen understood the smallness of life to perfection. She was a great artist, equal in her small sphere to Shakespeare. I think *Persuasion* and *Mansfield Park* are my favourites. There is a saying that if God made the country, and man the town, the devil made the little country town. There is nothing equal to the smallness of a small town.”

After a magnificent recitation of “*Lycidas*” came the unexpected outburst, “I don’t suppose one blessed German can appreciate the glory of the verse as I can,” and on hearing that one of the party had not read through *Paradise Lost* he called out, “Shameless daughter of your age.” The indifference to religion of the age was touched on, and X— began to uphold Shelley’s views for the regeneration of mankind.

A. T. Shelley had not common-sense!

X—. Well, but had Christ common-sense?

A. T. Christ had more common-sense than you or I, Madam.

*My mother's journal.—Death of Sir John Simeon,  
Franco-German War*

*March 1st.* Aldworth. Hallam read the 4th *Æneid* with A.; they study Virgil together daily. We were interested by an article of Froude's on *Government and the Governed*.

He received from a stranger, Mr. John White of Cowes, a melancholy letter, and a present of a cartload of wood—old oak from one of the broken up men-of-war. A. wrote to him.

FARRINGFORD, *March 8th*, 1870.

DEAR SIR,

Your present has rather amazed me, though not unpleasantly: so I accept it with thanks, and I will sit by the "blue light" gratefully, and hope for you that *your* light may be no longer "low," and if you ever come my way I shall be glad to see you.

Yours faithfully, A. TENNYSON.

*May 23rd.* The terrible blow of Sir John Simeon's death (at Friburg) fell on us just as we were starting for Aldworth.

*May 31st.* A. went to Swainston for the funeral. [He wrote "In the Garden at Swainston"<sup>1</sup> smoking one of Sir John's pipes in the Swainston garden.] "All dreadfully sad and trying, and seeming all the sadder, for the sun shone and the roses bloomed profusely."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> First published in the Cabinet Edition of the Collected Poems, 1874.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from my father.



## SIR JOHN SIMEON

1870

A. very sad, his loss haunted him. Sir John was a brother to us.

A. wrote to Lady Simeon :

ALDWORTH, *June 27th*, 1870.

MY DEAR LADY SIMEON,

Of course nothing could be more grateful to me than some memorial of my much-loved and ever honoured friend, the only man on earth, I verily believe, to whom I could, and have more than once opened my whole heart; and he also has given me in many a conversation at Farringford in my little attic his utter confidence. I knew none like him for tenderness and generosity, not to mention his other noble qualities, and he was the very Prince of Courtesy; but I need not tell you this; anything, little book, or whatever you will choose, send me or bring when you come; and do pray come on the 4th July, and we will be all alone; and Louie can come, when she will, and you can spare her.

Believe me, always affectionately yours,

A. TENNYSON.

This June A. was asked to become President of the Newsvendors' Benevolent Institution. His letter to Mr. Walter Jones ran as follows :

SIR,

*June 1870.*

First let me thank the Committee and yourself for the honour you have desired to

confer upon me, which, however, I feel obliged to decline accepting ; for I am neither a diner out, nor a speaker after dinner, nor could without violence to the truth be called a man of business. I should be but a *roi fainéant*, which I don't wish to be—the square man in the round hole—but, if you wish for the square man in the square hole, I am sure Lord Houghton would be proud to serve your cause as President.

At the same time, with the permission of your Committee, I should be happy to be one of your Vice-Presidents by the side of my friend Longfellow.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant, A. TENNYSON.

*July 26th.* Aldworth. (A. was laid up with gout in town.) Hallam and I went to town to fetch him, and that I might receive instructions from our kind friend Sir James Paget.<sup>1</sup> Lady Augusta Stanley took us in her carriage to the station. Lady Charlotte Locker with us. A. told us that war between France and Germany was declared.

At this time he constantly anticipated that England, if she continued as she was, unprepared, would be some day invaded and smashed ; and said, “We rashly expose ourselves to danger,

<sup>1</sup> Sir James had strictly charged my father not to touch his leg. One day he said : “The doctor says that I mustn't scratch my leg, but I can't help it, and last night I scratched it till I could have shrieked with glory.”

and in our press offend foreign powers, being the most beastly self-satisfied nation in the world."

*Nov. 1st.* What a craze the tendency now-a-days to invent gossiping stories! Emily<sup>1</sup> copied the passage in Miss Mitford's letters, which states that A. dug the garden of Miss Repton's father at Sevenoaks, whereas A. never saw him or his garden. Then there was an illustrated paper came, which stated that he was at Louth School until he went to Trinity, the fact being, he says, that he remained at Louth two or three years; and after ten he was taught at home by his father, until he went to Trinity.

Another story the paper gave of his having been taken into custody as a smuggler, when watching a stormy sea,—the only foundation for this being that one wild night on the Farringford Down the coast-guard said to him, "Who goes there? O you, Sir! a stormy night!" or some such words.

Mrs. Bowen told us a nice story of a little boy in the village who had informed her that Mr. Tennyson was "the gentleman who made *poets* for the Queen under the stars,—that policeman had often seen him at it."

*Nov. 4th.* Mr. Arthur Sullivan, Mr. Knowles, and Mr. Strahan came. Mr. Sullivan wished to publish the "Window Songs."<sup>2</sup> A. did not like publishing songs that were so trivial at such a grave crisis of affairs in Europe; but he had given his promise to Mr. Sullivan about them, and "He that sweareth unto his neighbour and disappointeth him not" determined

<sup>1</sup> My father's sister.

<sup>2</sup> Printed first at the Canford Manor Press in 1867, when my father was staying with the Guests. Published by Strahan, with music by Arthur Sullivan, December, 1870.

us. So they are to be published with the protest : " I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days ; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise."

*Nov. 8th.* Mr. Peach, the dear old Cornish geologist, is here. A. read me some of Pepys' *Diary*. At night he repeated some of " The Last Tournament " which he had just written. We read about starlings in Morris ; I did not know (what A. had put into his *Idyll* from his own observation) that the starlings in June, after they have brought up their young ones, congregate in flocks in a reedy place for the sake of sociability.

*Nov. 12th.* Aunt Franklin [Lady Franklin] and Sophy Cracroft came to luncheon from Moor Park. Both charmed with our view. A. declined going in a ship with the astronomers to Cadiz as he had hoped to do, finding that a poem on the eclipse was expected from him, " a thing absurd and out of the question." Likely enough that no one will go if this insolent despatch of Gortschakoff brings war, as it should do if not withdrawn.

*Nov. 20th.* A. talked, as he had done of late, chiefly of the state of England and Europe. He cared so much for this that most other things just then seemed matters of indifference to him. He thought of writing to Lord Granville, to tell him how grateful he was for his spirited remonstrance : and he said, " How strange England cannot see her true policy lies in a close union with our colonies ! " He added : " We ought to have all boys at school drilled, so that we may be more ready for defensive war than now."

1871

*My mother's journal.—Death of Spedding's brother, Despondency, Jenny Lind, "The Last Tournament," Tourgueneff, George Eliot, Gladstone, Wales, Huxley, Illness of the Prince of Wales*

On New Year's Day A. received this touching letter from Mr. Spedding :

WESTBOURNE TERRACE,  
Dec. 21st, 1870.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I should have answered your very kind letter sooner, but I doubted which house to direct to, as you seemed to be on the point of moving. I suppose I shall be safe now in writing to Farringford.

My brother's death was altogether sudden and unexpected; for he had been remarkably well all the year and showed no symptoms of failing in any way, unless possibly a very slight appearance of the "bowed shoulder of a bland old age" reminded you that he had just completed his threescore years and ten, and how lightly they lay upon him. Till within two days of his death there had been no symptoms of illness observable by anybody; nor were the symptoms which appeared then such as to cause immediate alarm. His first attack of pain was on Saturday. It was not till Monday afternoon that another severe attack made them send for the doctor, who pronounced the seat of disorder to be in the heart but did not apprehend any present danger. He died in the middle of that night without a word or a struggle or a sign of distress. "God's finger touched him and he slept."

When death comes in the middle of life, I do not mean in middle age but with no symptoms of decay by way of warning, people think it an aggravation. To me the premonitory decay seems the worst part of the business, a business in which man and nature between them are too apt to make ugly work. To have lived till 70 in full health of body and mind, and then to depart without knowing it, is surely for a mortal man a lot not to be regretted or repudiated. And though for the survivors the shock is greater at the time, it brings far less suffering even to them, than the more ordinary fate of tedious and distressing sickness, with all its miserable anxieties, and things painful not only to witness but ever after to remember. In this case there is nothing to remember which is in any way distressing. While the life lasted it was pleasant to look upon: it departed in pure peace and rest: leaving no troubles behind,—only the sense of a good thing gone, and the want which is the measure of its value.

Such a blow could not have been better borne (according to my notions) than this has been by all the family: no shutting up with grief: no hanging of the past with black and making remembrance uncheerful: but such a state of mind as becomes those who look upon death as upon the entrance of a future life, who know that their sorrow is for themselves, not for him, and to whom the memory of the past remains a secure possession, sacred but not sad. The house when I left it was going on almost as it would have done if he had only been absent on a journey, leaving his son to take his place in the meantime.

Yours very truly,

JAMES SPEDDING.

## LIONEL AT ETON

1871

A. wrote to Mr. Oscar Browning :

FARRINGFORD, *Sunday, Feb. 12th, 1871.*

MY DEAR MR. BROWNING,

I ought before this to have thanked you for having sent me the apparition-story,<sup>1</sup> and your friend for having written it out for me. Pardon the delay, and accept my thanks now for him, and for yourself. Could he and would he get for me Miss Cobbe's? I rejoice that my few words about the teaching of history seem to have borne fruit at Eton, and I am glad that Lionel was present at your lecture: he has, I believe, a mind really capable of great thoughts, but is so impressionable that it is more important to him than to most boys to have these continually put before him. Will you tell Mr. Johnson<sup>2</sup> how exquisite I think his translation of "Hesper," which I have just now seen in this Sunday's *Spectator*? My wife's kind remembrances, and

Believe me yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

*February.* A. received Mr. Jowett's four volumes of Plato, a most welcome gift for itself and for the donor. I cut open the *Phaedo* for him. He talked on the subjects nearest his heart, the Resurrection and the Immortality of the Soul. He read to me a paper in the *Edinburgh Royal Society Transactions*.

<sup>1</sup> The story of Professor Conington's wraith being seen in Oriel Lane at the time of his death.

<sup>2</sup> The author of *Ionica* had translated "In Memoriam," cxxi.

## JENNY LIND

Lord and Lady Elcho called : he and A. discussed Cardwell's army reforms ; something more radical seems to be needed.

*Feb. 26th.* In Maiden's Croft. He spoke despondingly of the tone of literature, as is his wont now from time to time. He foreboded "the fiercest battle the world has yet known between good and evil, faith and unfaith."

What does midnight to-night bring? Peace or War for France and Germany? Surely peace. The continuance of such a war is too horrible to think of.

A. has been taking pains to help the Committee of the City of London Fund for the relief of Paris.

He copied "Break, Break," for Lady F. Cavendish, as the first MS. of it had been burnt at Holker : and wrote to Mr. Palgrave inclosing the copy.

FARRINGFORD, *May 4th*, 1871.

DEAR P.

Here it is ! a weariness of the flesh writing out my own things, but I have done it. I only wish that the Gainsboroughs and Reynolds were as easily replaceable as this MS. Love from myself and wife to yours.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

P.S. This place has been very full. Jenny Lind coming to dine here to-day. We go to the mountains about the end of this month.

*May 4th.* Jenny Lind came to Farringford and sang "Auld Lang Syne" and "Auld Robin Gray" for A. at his especial request. Of these and "Bonnie



Doon" (the words of the last ruined for the music he thought) he was very fond.

She sang Handel and some of the *Elijah* magnificently. She is full of feeling and of fun, and is deeply religious.

May 21st. He read me his "Tristram"<sup>1</sup> ["Last Tournament"], the plan of which he had been for some weeks discussing with me. Very grand and terrible.

May 28th. We went into the kitchen garden to see the splendid crimson poppies with their black marks inside the blossom (favourite flowers with A.).

June 5th. Mr. Edward FitzGerald wrote :

Very imperfect as Laurence's portrait<sup>2</sup> [of A.] is, it is nevertheless the *best* painted portrait I have seen ; and certainly the *only* one of old days. "Blubber-lip" I remember once Alfred called it ; so it is ; but still the only one of old days, and still the best of all to my thinking. I like to go back to days before the beard, which makes rather a Dickens of A. T. *in the photographs*—to my mind. If you are at all of this mind, tell Laurence to send it back to you, swept and garnished with a suitable frame, and hang it up, where *you* at any rate may have it before your eyes, with all its imperfections on its head. When last I heard from Spedding, half a year ago, I think, he said that Alfred had never called for the drawing by Thackeray of the Lord of Burleigh<sup>3</sup> which I sent him. Tell him I don't think Browning would have served me so, and I mean to prefer his poems for the future.

The following letter was written by A. to Mrs. Elmhirst [née Rawsley] on the death of her son :

<sup>1</sup> Just written.

<sup>2</sup> Now at Aldworth.

<sup>3</sup> Now in my father's study at Farringford.

HASLEMERE, *June*, 1871.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

I ought to have written to you before to express my sympathy with you on the loss of your son, and I thought of writing at the moment when I first heard of your great affliction, but somehow I myself have always felt that letters of condolence, when the grief is yet raw and painful, are like vain voices in the ears of the deaf, not heard or only half heard. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith, though I am not a stranger indeed, but your old friend from your childhood. However, when Drummond and Catherine were here the other day, he said he thought you would be soothed by hearing from me ; so I write, though I doubt whether I can bring you any solace, except indeed by stating my own belief that the son, whom you so loved, is not really what we call dead, but more actually living than when alive here.

You cannot catch the voice, or feel the hands, or kiss the cheek, that is all ; a separation for an hour, not an eternal farewell. If it were not so, that which made us would seem too cruel a Power to be worshipped, and could not be loved, but I trust that you believe all this, and by this time have attained to some degree of tranquillity : and your husband also.

I hear that *he* was very amiable and full of promise, and the manner of his death, and its taking place far away from you, and its suddenness, must have so added sorrow to sorrow, that I almost fear you will think I write coldly, but I do not feel coldly. Kindest remembrances to Elmhirst, and also to the Hallidays, and

Believe me affectionately yours,

A. TENNYSON.

*June 22nd.* A. and Hallam went to town for the Royal Academy.

*June.* Aldworth. Tourgueneff the Russian novelist (whose *Lisa* and *Pères et Enfants* A. liked much) and Mr. Ralston arrived. Tourgueneff (a tall, large, white-haired man with a strong face) was most interesting, and told us stories of Russian life with a great graphic power and vivacity.

He told us how, in the Cossack council, they used all to stand in a circle and talk or fight until they were unanimous, whether the question was great or small. It might be an election of "Peter" or "John," and they would fight till all said "Peter."

He spoke too of a wonderful instance of the "Origin of legends" as he called it, which A. recounted in these words afterwards.

"Before the actual enfranchisement of the serfs by the Czar, many became unruly. So the Czar resolved to go on a progress thro' his dominions. At each place the serfs were assembled, and he made a little speech, telling them that he was the Czar who had freed them, and that he expected them to be obedient to their old masters until nine years were passed (which

he had fixed as the limit of their serfdom), and that then they were to be entirely free.

When the Czar came to Tourgueneff's village, Tourgueneff was ill, and could not accompany his serfs, but the Starosta or head man of the village went.

Presently he, with about thirty serfs, rushed into the room where Tourgueneff was sitting, and they all began talking together, 'Oh we have seen such a wonderful thing.' Tourgueneff said, 'I cannot hear you, if you speak all at once: let the Starosta speak!' Accordingly the Starosta spoke: 'There came a chariot drawn by four horses, and inside the chariot was a beautiful man in glittering armour, but he was not the Czar. He passed by us and vanished into the wilderness. Then came another magnificent chariot with a still more beautiful man, in resplendent and bejewelled armour; and this was the White Czar of all the Russias! And he stood up in his chariot, and spread his arms abroad! Then he beat upon his breast, and he said, 'Do you know who I am?' Then we all fell to the earth with our heads in the dust, and we saw nothing, but he beat upon his breast again three times, and cried aloud, 'Obey, obey, obey,' and then the chariot began to move, and we watched him as far as eye could see, and the chariot whirled him away, and he vanished into the wilderness.'

And all the serfs of the village chimed in, whenever the Starosta paused, 'Yes, yes, it is all as he says.' When Tourgueneff was well enough, he went to the station, and asked what had really happened, and was informed that the Czar did not once get up in his carriage, that he was dressed in an ordinary frock-coat like an English gentleman, and that he made the same little quiet speech he had made at all the villages in the country. Tourgueneff said: 'No doubt all the serfs

had their heads in the dust and dared not look at the Czar, and were too scared to hear what he said, and had imagined the whole scene.'"

Tourgueneff and A. had great games at German backgammon.

*June 28th.* Tourgueneff received a letter about the sale of his home in Baden, and to our regret had to go to-day.

*July 14th.* A. travelled down from London with G. H. Lewes, who took him to his home at Witley and introduced him to Mrs. Lewes [George Eliot]. A. thought her "like the picture of Savonarola." She told him that Professor Sylvester's laws for verse-making had been useful to her. A. replied that he could not understand this. He likes her *Adam Bede*, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Silas Marner* best of her novels. *Romola* he thinks somewhat out of her depth.

*July 20th.* We drove to Cowdray Park, and home by Fernhurst. A. specially admired the large Spanish chestnuts and the Templar's walk of yews at Cowdray.

*July 22nd.* A. and Hallam drove to meet Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone and their daughter Helen. A telegram came to say they would not arrive till a later train, so A. and Hallam called on Mr. and Mrs. Lewes. She is delightful in a *tête-à-tête*, and speaks in a soft soprano voice, which almost sounds like a fine falsetto, with her strong masculine face. An interesting evening with talk ranging everywhere. At the Gladstones' request A. read "The Holy Grail," which Mr. Gladstone admired. We discussed the Goschen parish council plan and other social reforms.

*July 23rd.* Hallam and our guests attended a schoolroom service at Haslemere (for the church was being enlarged).

After luncheon A., Hallam, and the Gladstones walked to the end of Blackdown. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone frisked about like boy and girl in the heather. "A very noble fellow," A. called him, "and perfectly unaffected."

At dinner and afterwards the conversation most interesting, about politics and the stormy times ahead ; and Lacordaire, and his liberal Catholicism. Mr. Gladstone assured us that he was a "Conservative," and that he \* \* \* feared "extreme measures from the Opposition." He is a man of versatile mind and great impulsiveness. One could not but feel humbled in the presence of those whose life was evidently one long self-sacrifice, and, one would hope, quickened to more of it in one's own life. Mrs. Gladstone wears herself out by all her hospital work in addition to the work of a prime minister's wife. Her daughter helps her, and helps her brother also in his bad Lambeth parish.

A good many people were at the station on the 24th when they went away to London.

*July 29th.* Mrs. Greville, Mrs. Fanny Kemble, and Lord Houghton came to luncheon. Fanny Kemble read Shakespeare magnificently, with tears streaming down her cheeks. She told us that, when she was nearly drowned, she did not recall the scenes of her former life, but the "terrible thing was that all her life appeared a blank." As they drove away up the hill, we heard her command Lord Houghton in her tragic way, "Get down, my lord, from off the box, for you are no inconsiderable weight."

A. is rejoiced that the National Education Bill has been passed : he admires Mr. Forster's courage. "No education, no franchise," is A.'s epigram.

*August 7th.* A. and Hallam set off to-day for North Wales ; Llanberis and Snowdon by way of

Uriconium, staying with the Archibald Peels<sup>1</sup> at Wrexham.

*Aug. 11th.* A letter, English hexameters, from the travellers. They had arrived at Llanberis: a jovial party apparently in the room above theirs in the Hotel Victoria.

Dancing above was heard, heavy feet to the sound of a  
light air,  
Light were the feet no doubt but floors were mis-  
representing.

Next morning they started early.

Walked to the Vale Gwynant, Llyn Gwynant shone  
very distant  
Touched by the morning sun, great mountains glorying  
o'er it,  
Moel Hebog loom'd out, and Siabod tower'd up in  
æther :  
Liked Beddgelert much, flat green with murmur of waters,  
Bathed in a deep still pool not far from Pont Aber-  
glaslyn—  
(Ravens croak'd, and took white, human skin for a  
lambkin).

Then we returned.—What a day! Many more if fate  
will allow it.

*Aug. 16th.* The travellers have come back.

*Aug. 31st.* A. drove to the Lewes'. He read to them, and last of all at G. H. Lewes' request "Guinevere," which made George Eliot weep.

*Sept. 1st.* A. takes long walks in the evenings. He is very cheerful, and is reading me a book about Russia.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Archibald Peel was a most faithful friend from 1851 onwards.

He is interested in the strange sects among the Russians, and the character of the Russian peasant and the strong feeling of unity in the nation. He has read and given me to read *Fraser's Magazine* with suggestive articles on colonial federation, and against the inclosure of commons, against which he has always protested. A general Colonial Council for the purposes of defence sounds to us sensible. He advocated inter-colonial conferences in England; and was of opinion that the foremost colonial ministers ought to be admitted to the Privy Council or to some other Imperial council, where they could have a voice in Imperial affairs.

*Sept. 4th.* We both read Browning's *Balaustion*. Heracles the free, the joyous, the strong, the self-sacrificer, a grand creation.

*Sept. 8th.* A. went to the George Howards at Naworth Castle. He liked the free, independent peasantry. He talks of an ancient stone trough, about which the members of an Archæological Society were discoursing, when a countryman stepped forward, still bitter with the old border spirit: "It is where we washed them Scots in before we hanged them."

*Nov. 10th.* Aldworth. A. sent his poem "England and America" to the *New York Ledger*.

*Nov. 11th.* Mr. Huxley and Mr. Knowles arrived here on a visit. Mr. Huxley was charming. We had much talk. He was chivalrous, wide, and earnest, so that one could not but enjoy talking with him. There was a discussion on George Eliot's humility. Huxley and A. both thought her a humble woman, despite a dogmatic manner of assertion that had come upon her latterly in her writings. Mr. Knowles and Mr. Arnold White<sup>1</sup> have been kind in arranging A.'s

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Arnold White, the well-known lawyer.



publishing business. Mr. Knowles's active nature, I think, sometimes spurs A. on to work when he is flagging.<sup>1</sup>

*Nov. 20th.* He reads to me the new poem, "Sir Gareth," which he has almost written down. It is full of youth, vigour, and beauty.

*Dec. 11th.* Anxious telegrams about our Prince (of Wales). Touching accounts reach us of the Princess; her speech failed her from anxiety, and when she was allowed to go into the Prince's room, she stood for hours looking at him through a hole in the screen.

This illness has quelled the chatter about the expense of royalty to England. A. says, "Our Government plus Royalty is the cheapest government of any great country in the world."

A.'s new study was not quite finished, and he wandered about drying the wet places on the walls with a hot poker.

*Christmas.* I was very unwell, and he said, "I leave you to your two sons' nursing," but he did not, and watched over me as tenderly and carefully as ever.

He does his work in the morning regularly after his breakfast at 8 o'clock; then walks before luncheon with the boys or a friend, and one or two dogs.

He has inserted his "Last Tournament" in the December *Contemporary*, and wrote on Dec. 21st a letter thanking Mr. Browning for his *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*.

<sup>1</sup> My father would at this time point his finger at Mr. Knowles with a grim smile and say: "I was often urged to go on with the 'Idylls,' but I stuck: and then this beast said, 'Do it,' and I did it."

1872

*Letters, My mother's journal, Paris and the  
Chartreuse, "Gareth," "Epilogue to the Idylls"*

Mr. Emerson wrote about his daughter's visit to England :

*Jan. 21st, 1872.*

MY DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

I cannot let my daughter pass through London without tasking your benevolence to give her the sight of your face. Her husband Colonel Wm. H. Forbes (himself a good soldier in the Massachusetts Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion) and Edith set forth to-morrow for England, France and Italy, and I of course shall not think they see England unless they see you. I pray you to gratify them and me so far. You shall not write a line the less, and I shall add this grace to your genius. With kindest remembrance of my brief meeting with you,

Yours always, R. W. EMERSON.

The following letter was sent to Mr. Gladstone about an application from Z— for a pension :

*Feb. 5th, 1872.*

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

You see that I am requested by Browning, Houghton, and others, to forward the enclosed to you, and I do not suppose that you can go far wrong in pensioning poor Z—, who has done hard work in more ways than one, and is now on the threshold of old age. Heaven

help you fair through the Session, like enough to be a rough one—but if you let those Yankees get anything like their way of you in the Alabama claims, I won't pay my "ship-money" any more than old Hampden.

Ever yours, A. TENNYSON.

*Answer from the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone*

11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,  
*Feb. 9th, 1872.*

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

With respect to literary pensions I think it was the intention of parliament that they should be given to really distinguished literary men. I need not name the great instances in which this practice has been pursued. Gradually the standard seems to have declined; in part no doubt because the endowment supplied by public approbation is now, as a general rule, materially improved. An article in the *Quarterly Review* recently exhibited (perhaps with exaggeration) the insignificance of many recent recipients. Since assuming my present office I have found that it was necessary, in practice, to recognise loss of health, old age or calamity, as elements in the case for pensions of this class; but I have endeavoured to limit this admission to those cases only where some real service had been rendered, by works of intrinsic value, to the cause of letters. I am afraid upon enquiry that this case may not be up to the mark according to this rule. I am constantly refusing applications where personal character, undoubted need, and *respectable* authorship are combined. The pension list would I fear become a source

of mischief were it made available for this class. All this, because I am desirous you should understand that the application you have sent me is not treated lightly. Minor aid, I may add, is sometimes given from another fund, by small grants not annual ; and in these cases the standard of literary merit is not lifted quite so high.

Yours very sincerely,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

P.S. Be assured we are all ears and eyes and thought too I hope in the American matter.

Lady Charlotte Locker died suddenly ; and my father wrote to Mr. Locker :

FARRINGFORD,  
*April 28th, 1872.*

I scarcely dare to write. The shock must have been so terrible, just when things seemed better. I would we could know how you have borne it. Sure at least I am that, even in this first anguish of grief, you can think with thankfulness that the weary days of suffering are over for ever with your dearest one, and can trust that she is happy now with the God and Saviour she has loved and served. May He strengthen you to bear your immeasurable loss. Is there not even in its greatness, that which helps to make it bearable ? Had she been less a creature of light and love, you could not have had the beautiful memory, or the sustaining help you now have.

Vain words all, I know : forgive them as all that one poor human sympathy can do at such an hour.

When you are able to come to us, and it will be good for you to come, you must come. We will do all the little we can for you you know, with all true love.

Ever your affectionate

ALFRED AND EMILY TENNYSON.

*June 22nd.* Farringford. Every night A. has read Shakespeare, or Pascal, or Montesquieu (*Décadence des Romains*).

On July 9th A. went to London about "Gareth," and wrote: "I have sent 'Gareth'<sup>1</sup> to press this morning. The MS. is so ill-written that I expect much confusion."

*Aug. 6th.* We went to Paris. A. said that the hollow eyes of the ruined Tuileries looked out very ironically, with "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité" written above them. The maid at the Hôtel St. Romain gave us a pitiful account of her living through the siege, half-starved, for four months in the cellars. A. and the boys spent the day in the Louvre. He told the boys that in 1848 he saw two Englishmen come to look at the Venus of Milo. They were discussing Peel

<sup>1</sup> On April 5th my father had written to Mr. Knowles (then Editor of the *Contemporary Review*): "'Gareth' is not finished yet. I left him off once altogether, finding him more difficult to deal with than anything excepting perhaps 'Aylmer's Field.' If I were at liberty, which I think I am not, to print the names of the speakers 'Gareth' 'Linette' over the short snip-snap of their talk, and so avoid the perpetual 'said' and its varieties, the work would be much easier. I have made out the plan however, and perhaps some day it will be completed; and it will be then to consider whether or no it should go into the *Contemporary* or elsewhere." "Gareth" was published by Strahan in the autumn (1872) along with "The Last Tournament."

and the corn laws. "This is the finest statue in the whole world." "Yes, but about Peel now," and so back they went to the corn laws, and the "finest statue in the world" was left unheeded. He immensely admired the portraits by Velasquez with a far-away look in the eyes : and Titian's Entombment.

He bought and read many volumes of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset. He praised the *Chasseur Noir*. Alfred de Musset's *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* and his other comedies were favourites of A.'s.<sup>1</sup>

Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>. To Dijon, thence to Mâcon and Vienne.

We drove along the valley of the Isère to Grenoble, and A. said, "This is our best day." A magic, dreamy light on the crags which stretched far away into the distance. Beneath were vines, and fruit-trees, and full crops. From Grenoble we drove to Sassenaye.

Aug. 21<sup>st</sup>. Grenoble. A. and Lionel went to the Chartreuse Monastery, a splendid drive by the side of a torrent. A. told me to read Victor Hugo's *Burgraves*. He wanted to know what I thought of the "strange confusion of times." There seems to me something fine in the ideas, though Uther Pendragon is out of place.

At midnight mass A. and Lionel had a dim view of the two chanting lines of white cowled monks, every three with a little lantern. This nightly service had gone on for hundreds of years, and is very solemn and affecting. A good dinner was served, no charge was made, and A. and L. were waited on by a silent monk with courtly bearing; "a great gentleman," A. said, "who looked as if he had been a distinguished officer

<sup>1</sup> My father was fond (about this time) of dipping into French history; Thierry, Thiers, Lavallée, Montalembert, Michelet, Guizot, Lanfrey.

in the French army." Next day the Procureur showed them over the Monastery, which is bare and stern, and every now and then opened the doors of the cells. A. inquired if any of the monks kept skeletons or skulls to remind them of their mortality. The Procureur shook his head.

*Aug. 29th.* A. and Lionel climbed the Dent du Chat, more than 6000 feet high. They had a beautiful view of Mont Blanc, A. saying it "looked like a great cathedral with three naves." The guide approved of his powers of endurance, and called both father and son good mountaineers.

*Sept. 2nd.* Geneva. A. took me to the meeting of the rivers, "the clear stream with the muddy one." When the night deepened (as he and I had noticed at Cauteretz and elsewhere) the rushing of the Rhone sounded louder and louder.

The return to Aldworth was by way of Lausanne, Paris and Amiens, my father reading *Le Lendemain de la Mort* on the journey.

When we reached home, we found the following letter from Walt Whitman :

WASHINGTON, *Sept. 2nd, 1872.*

DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

After a long absence in the mountains and lakes of Vermont and Northern New York I am now back again at work and expect to remain here. Your letter of May 23rd, also the one with the picture,<sup>1</sup> safely reached me. The picture is superb and I consider myself in luck possessing it. It brings you very near me. I have it now before me.

<sup>1</sup> The frontispiece of Vol. VIII.

I send you by same mail with this in a little book my piece lately delivered for Dartmouth College Commencement up North. Did *Democratic Vistas* reach you?

We have had in this country a summer more fit for the infernal regions, but now the delicious Virginia September has set in balmy cool and one dilates and feels like work again.

With best respects and love,  
WALT WHITMAN.

*Sept. 24th.* Aldworth. A. sent off corrections of "Gareth" to the press. His lines on the honeysuckle in "Gareth" were made on the lawn about the honeysuckle that climbs up the house at Aldworth.

Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle  
In the hush'd night, as if the world were one  
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness.

He finished *Coriolanus* to us, which he reads dramatically and magnificently.

*Oct. 7th.* Alan and Mary Ker [A.'s sister] and Walter Ker and Emilia arrived. A. chaffed Mary about her sonnet-writing.

He said to her: "This is the sort of sonnet you would write to Swedenborg," then, without drawing breath, he spouted a sonnet, and at the end observed, "There is a sonnet with the most intricate rhymes, and now I do not remember a word of it." Many of his shorter poems were made like this, in a flash.

*Oct. 29th.* A. went to Clapham.



*My father's letter-diary*

*Oct. 31st.* The Hollies. I believe we are going to the theatre to-night to see "Bijou" which is great as a "spectacle." Gassiot, with whom I dined the day before yesterday, has a great voltaic battery and he showed us wonderful lights. K. is going to 'interview' Strahan about Charles' sonnets. Strahan has joined himself to King.

*Nov. 1st.* I have not set eyes on the Canada paragraph, but Knowles, who has gone off to Brighton to-day, says he will get it for me. I saw "Bijou" last night, and was ashamed of my countrymen flocking to such a wretched nonentity, miserable stagey-toned, unmeaning dialogue: only one thing made amends, a young damsel whose dancing was music and poetry. By the bye I read in the bill that one of the actresses was Miss Tennyson. I think it is a fancy name assumed by her. I have not yet got my sheets back from the printer.

*Nov. 4th.* I called on Carlyle yesterday but he was out.

*Nov. 6th.* I haven't seen Palgrave yet or Woolner. K. has asked Pollock to dinner to-morrow, and Mr. King the publisher, who once visited at Farringford, is coming. I have not written to Browning yet or seen him, but must one or other. I am trying to write a war song for the knights in the first "Idyll."

*November 8th.* Lady Franklin has sent me that Canadian bit of the *Times*.<sup>1</sup> Villainous.

*November 10th.* It seems to me all right for the knights going forth to break the heathen.<sup>2</sup> It is early times yet, and many years are to elapse before the more settled time of "Gareth." I must say that to me the song rings like a grand music. An article in the *Spectator* on Twickenham where Hallam is mentioned.

*November 11th.* I think of coming home on Wednesday, for I stop for the "Metaphysical" on Tuesday.

*November 13th.* There are several reasons why I cannot fulfil my promise of coming to-day,—one is I must go to my rooms in Victoria Street<sup>3</sup> and put things in order, as I have to vacate at the end of the year, and there are others. Archbishop Manning thanked me

<sup>1</sup> In answer to this article he wrote :

And that true North, whereof we lately heard  
A strain to shame us "keep you to yourselves ;  
So loyal is too costly ! friends—your love  
Is but a burthen ; loose the bond, and go."  
Is this the tone of empire ? here the faith  
That made us rulers ? this, indeed, her voice  
And meaning, whom the roar of Hougoumont  
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven ? etc.

Epilogue to the "Idylls of the King."

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the war-song "Clang battle-axe, and clash brand ! Let the King reign."

<sup>3</sup> Rooms in Albert Mansions which my father took (1870-1872) in order to be, during his visits to London, near his friends, Dean Stanley and Lady Augusta Stanley, and Frederick and Lady Charlotte Locker.

warmly last night for "Gareth," and I sat by Father Dalgairns, whom I gratified by telling of my wife's approval of his essay on God.

A poem arrived from Dr. W. C. Bennett which was acknowledged as follows :

*Nov. 13th, 1872.*

MY DEAR MR. BENNETT,

Thanks for your flattering poem. I could wish that I had something of what Master Swinburne calls "the Divine arrogance of genius," that I might take it into my system and rejoice abundantly ; but as Marvell says :

" At my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near ;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity,"

where most of us will be lost and swallowed up.  
Nevertheless, true thanks.

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*My mother's journal*

*December.* A. thought of writing a poem about a shipwreck on the Yorkshire coast, which Lord Houghton had described to him. One mid-winter a stranded vessel was found near Redcar ; women tied to the masts with men's coats thrown round their shoulders, and the sailors lying about the decks ; all of them, men and women, frozen to death. The name of the ship was "The Happy Home."

## 1872 LETTER FROM FITZGERALD

I have copied out for press the "Epilogue to the Idylls" he has just written: "O loyal to the royal in thyself." A. burnt with indignation and shame at one eminent statesman saying to him, "Would to God Canada would go!"

There was the usual Christmas letter from Edward FitzGerald:

WOODBIDGE, *Dec. 30th*, 1872.

To make amends for the audacious remarks I made, I transcribe what poor Savile Morton wrote to me.

"When I look into Alfred's poems, I am astonished at the size of the words and the thoughts. No man clothes an idea in language at once so apt, and so full of strength, music and dignity. Were a poet to be judged by single lines, I am not sure he would not deserve the first place among them all. How many of the lines of 'Locksley Hall' are perfect as a Sicilian tetradrachm, which is esteem'd the most beautiful of all coins, so round, so chisell'd, and of the purest metal. Virgil's *Georgics* have also the same perfection. Like Alfred's his lines coil themselves up in the mind.

I am satisfied that Goethe wanted the burning impressions of Tennyson on the mind, which rap the poet into the lyrical heaven. He was rarely impassioned; his nature was for most part a cold, classifying, methodical one, fitter for a philosopher than a poet."

There, Sir, is something for wife and son to read and keep, if they please. I lit upon it the other day in a MS. vol. of quotations from Morton's letters, all so good that I have wanted to get some one to put them in some magazine, but, of course, no one will do as I ask.

Believe me hers and yours always,

E. F. G.

To my father's favourite Library Edition (1872), published by Strahan, were added during this year the two early sonnets "Alexander" and "The Bridesmaid," also "The Third of February, 1852," "Literary Squabbles," "On a Spiteful Letter," and the "Epilogue" to the "Idylls of the King." He was asked to publish his vigorous answer to the attack made upon him by Lytton Bulwer (in 1847), but he would not comply with the request. "Let those wretched literary squabbles be forgotten." Spiteful attacks irritated him, for, as he would explain, "I hate spite : I am black-blooded like all the Tennysons. I remember all the malignant things said against me, but little of the praise." In his later years, when he was attacked, these moods of irritation were very rare, and he would quote his own lines :

Surely, after all,  
The noblest answer unto such  
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

## CHAPTER V

### "THE IDYLLS OF THE KING," AND "BALIN AND BALAN"

For an ye heard a music, like enow  
They are building still, seeing the city is built  
To music, therefore never built at all,  
And therefore built for ever.

WITH the publication of "Gareth and Lynette" in 1872 my father thought that he had completed the cycle of the "Idylls"; but later he felt that some further introduction to "Merlin and Vivien" was necessary, and so wrote "Balin and Balan."

From his earliest years he had written out in prose various histories of Arthur. His prefatory MS. note about the historical Arthur is: "He lived about 500 A.D. and defeated his enemies in a pitched battle in the Welsh kingdom of Strathclyde: and the earliest allusions to him are to be found in the Welsh bards of the seventh century. In the twelfth century Geoffrey of Monmouth collected the legends about him as an European conqueror in his *History of the Britons*: and translated them from Celtic into Latin.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wace translated them into French and added the story of the Round Table.

The *Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory was printed by Caxton in 1485.” On Malory, and later, on Lady Charlotte Guest’s translation of the *Mabinogion*, and on his own imagination, my father said that he chiefly founded his epic ; he has made the old legends his own, restored the idealism, and infused into them a spirit of modern thought and an ethical significance, setting his characters in a rich and varied landscape ; as indeed otherwise these archaic stories would not have appealed to the modern world at large.

In 1832 appeared the first of the Arthurian poems in the form of a lyric, “The Lady of Shalott” (another version of the story of Lancelot and Elaine), and this was followed in 1842 by the other lyrics, “Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere” (partly if not wholly written in 1830), and “Sir Galahad.”

The 1842 volume also contained the “Morte d'Arthur,” which now forms part of the “Passing of Arthur.”

The earliest fragment of an epic that I can find among my father’s MSS. in my possession was probably written about 1833, and is a sketch in prose. I give it as it stands.

### *King Arthur*

On the latest limit of the West in the land of Lyonesse, where, save the rocky Isles of Scilly,

all is now wild sea, rose the sacred Mount of Camelot. It rose from the deeps with gardens and bowers and palaces, and at the top of the Mount was King Arthur's hall, and the holy Minster with the Cross of gold. Here dwelt the King in glory apart, while the Saxons whom he had overthrown in twelve battles ravaged the land, and ever came nearer and nearer.

The Mount was the most beautiful in the world, sometimes green and fresh in the beam of morning, sometimes all one splendour, folded in the golden mists of the West. But all underneath it was hollow, and the mountain trembled, when the seas rushed bellowing through the porphyry caves; and there ran a prophecy that the mountain and the city on some wild morning would topple into the abyss and be no more.

It was night. The King sat in his Hall. Beside him sat the sumptuous Guinevere and about him were all his lords and knights of the Table Round. There they feasted, and when the feast was over the Bards sang to the King's glory.

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The following memorandum was presented by my father to Mr. Knowles at Aldworth on October 1, 1869, who told him that it was between thirty and forty years old. It was probably written at the same time as the fragment which I have just quoted. However the alle-



gorical drift here marked out was fundamentally changed in the later scheme of the “Idylls.”

K. A. Religious Faith.

King Arthur's three Guineveres.

The Lady of the Lake.

Two Guineveres. y<sup>e</sup> first prim. Christianity.  
2<sup>d</sup> Roman Catholicism. y<sup>e</sup> first is put away and dwells apart. 2<sup>d</sup> Guinevere flies. Arthur takes to the first again but finds her changed by lapse of Time.

Modred, the sceptical understanding. He pulls Guinevere, Arthur's latest wife, from the throne.

Merlin Emrys, the enchanter. Science. Marries his daughter to Modred.

Excalibur, war.

The sea, the people.	{	the S. are a sea-
The Saxons, the people.		people and it is theirs and a type of them.

The Round Table : liberal institutions.

Battle of Camlan.

2<sup>d</sup> Guinevere with the enchanted book and cup.

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Before 1840 it is evident that my father wavered between casting the Arthurian legends into the form of an epic or into that of a musical masque ; for in one of his 1833-1840 MS. books there is the following first rough draft of a scenario, into which the Lancelot and Elaine scenes were afterwards introduced.

K. A. Religious Faith

King Arthur's three Guineveres

The Lady of the Lake?

two Guineveres. 1<sup>st</sup> first prim. X<sup>y</sup>. 2<sup>d</sup> Roman  
Catholism. 1<sup>st</sup> first is put away & dwells  
apart. 2<sup>d</sup> Guinevere flies. Arthur takes  
to the first again but finds her changed  
by lapse of time

Mordred the sceptical understanding. He  
pulls Guinevere Arthur's latest wife from  
the throne.

Merlin Enraged the enchanter. Sicut  
marries his daughter to Mordred.  
Excalibur war.

the sea. the people } the S. are a sea people  
the Saxons the people } & it is there & a type  
of them.

The Round Table liberal institutions

Battle of Camlann.

---

2 Guinevere with the enchanted  
book & cup

NOTES FOR "THE IDYLLS OF THE KING"

From an Original MS., about 1833



*First Act*

Sir Mordred and his party. Mordred inveighs against the King and the Round Table. The knights, and the quest. Mordred scoffs at the Ladies of the Lake, doubts whether they are supernatural beings, etc. Mordred's cringing interview with Guinevere. Mordred and the Lady of the Lake. Arthur lands in Albyn.

*Second Act*

Lancelot's embassy and Guinevere. The Lady of the Lake meets Arthur and endeavours to persuade him not to fight with Sir Mordred. Arthur will not be moved from his purpose. Lamentation of the Lady of the Lake. Elaine. Marriage of Arthur.

*Third Act*

Oak tomb of Merlin. The song of Nimuë. Sir Mordred comes to consult Merlin. Coming away meets Arthur. Their fierce dialogue. Arthur consults Sir L. and Sir Bedivere. Arthur weeps over Merlin and is reproved by Nimuë, who inveighs against Merlin. Arthur asks Merlin the issue of the battle. Merlin will not enlighten him. Nimuë requests Arthur to question Merlin again. Merlin tells him he

shall bear rule again, but that the Ladies of the Lake can return no more. Guinevere throws away the diamonds into the river. The Court and the dead Elaine.

*Fourth Act*

Discovery by Mordred and Nimuë of Lancelot and Guinevere. Arthur and Guinevere's meeting and parting.

*Fifth Act*

The battle. Chorus of the Ladies of the Lake. The throwing away of Excalibur and departure of Arthur.

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After this my father began to study the epical King Arthur in earnest. He had travelled in Wales, and meditated a tour in Cornwall. He thought, read, talked about King Arthur. He made a poem on Lancelot's quest of the San Graal; "in as good verse," he said, "as I ever wrote—no, I did not write, I made it in my head, and it has altogether slipped out of memory."<sup>1</sup> What he called "the greatest of all poetical subjects" perpetually haunted him. But it was not till 1855 that he determined upon the final shape of the poem, and not until 1859 that he

<sup>1</sup> Letter from my father to the Duke of Argyll, 1859.

published the first instalment, "Enid,"<sup>1</sup> "Vivien," "Elaine," "Guinevere." In spite of the public applause he did not rush headlong into the other "Idylls of the King," although he had carried a more or less perfected scheme of them in his head over thirty years. For one thing, he did not consider that the time was ripe. In addition to this, he did not find himself in the proper mood to write them, and he never could work except at what his heart impelled him to do.—Then, however, he devoted himself with all his energies and with infinite enthusiasm to that work alone.

He also gave some other reasons for pausing in the production of the "Idylls." "One," he wrote, "is because I could hardly light upon a finer close than that ghost-like passing away of the King" (in "Guinevere"), although the "Morte d'Arthur" was the natural close. The second was that he was not sure he could keep up to the same high level throughout the remaining "Idylls." "I have thought about it," he writes in 1862, "and arranged all the intervening 'Idylls,' but I dare not set to work for fear of a failure and time lost." The third was, to give it in his own words, "I doubt whether such a subject as the San Graal could be handled in these days without incurring a charge of

<sup>1</sup> He found out that the "E" in "Enid" was pronounced short (as if it were spelt 'Ennid'), and so altered the phrase in the proofs "wedded Enid" to "married Enid."

Had married Enid, Yniol's only child.

irreverence. It would be too much like playing with sacred things.” “The Holy Grail” however later on seemed to come suddenly, as if by a breath of inspiration ; and that volume was given to the world in 1869, containing (see previous chapter) “The Coming of Arthur,” “The Holy Grail,” “Pelleas and Ettarre,” and “The Passing of Arthur.”

In 1871 “The Last Tournament” was privately printed, and then published in the *Contemporary Review* : republished with “Gareth and Lynette” in 1872. These with “Balin and Balan” (published in 1885) make up the “twelve books,”—the number mentioned in the Introduction to the “Morte d’Arthur.”

In 1870 an article on the “Idylls” by Dean Alford, the old college friend of Arthur Hallam and of my father, came out in the *Contemporary* : an able letter also by J. T. Knowles appeared in the *Spectator*.<sup>1</sup> These reviews my father considered the best.<sup>2</sup> But in later years he often said, “They have taken my hobby, and ridden it too hard, and have explained some things too allegorically, although there is an allegorical or perhaps rather a parabolic drift in the poem.” “Of course Camelot for instance, a city of shadowy

<sup>1</sup> See *Contemporary Review*, May, 1873.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Knowles writes to me : “He encouraged me to write a short paper, in the form of a letter to the *Spectator*, on the inner meaning of the whole poem, which I did, simply upon the lines he himself indicated. He often said, however, that an allegory should never be pressed too far.”

palaces, is everywhere symbolic of the gradual growth of human beliefs and institutions, and of the spiritual development of man. Yet there is no single fact or incident in the 'Idylls,' however seemingly mystical, which cannot be explained as without any mystery or allegory whatever." The Bishop of Ripon (Boyd Carpenter) once asked him whether they were right who interpreted the three Queens, who accompanied King Arthur on his last voyage, as Faith, Hope and Charity. He answered: "They are right, and they are not right. They mean that and they do not. They are three of the noblest of women. They are also those three Graces, but they are much more. I hate to be tied down to say, '*This means that*,' because the thought within the image is much more than any one interpretation."

As for the many meanings of the poem my father would affirm, "Poetry is like shot-silk with many glancing colours. Every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability, and according to his sympathy with the poet." The general drift of the "Idylls" is clear enough. "The whole," he said, "is the dream of man coming into practical life and ruined by one sin. Birth is a mystery and death is a mystery, and in the midst lies the tableland of life, and its struggles and performances. It is not the history of one man or of one generation but of a whole cycle of generations." Dean Alford writes :



One noble design warms and unites the whole. In Arthur's coming—his foundation of the Round Table—his struggles and disappointments, and departure—we see the conflict continually maintained between the spirit and the flesh ; and in the pragmatism issue, we recognize the bearing down in history and in individual man of pure and lofty Christian purpose by the lusts of the flesh, by the corruptions of superstition, by human passions and selfishness.

Yet in spite of the ebbs and flows in the tide of human affairs, in spite of the temporary bearing down of the pure and lofty purpose, the author has carefully shadowed forth the spiritual progress and advance of the world, and has enshrined man's highest hopes in this new-old legend, crowning with a poet's prophetic vision the vague and disjointed dreams of a bygone age.

About the characterization Knowles says : “ As the pages are turned over . . . and as name after name again catches the eye, one is newly struck by the abundant and *dramatic* variety of the men and women moving to and fro ! All, as before said, are *alive* and recognisable at a glance, at the sound as it were of their voices.” This seems to me true. Lancelot the “ noblest brother and the truest man,” Tristram the bold and careless hunter, Galahad the pure, unearthly knight, Bors the blunt and honest, Bedivere the warm-hearted, all have been to me from boyhood living personalities, natural human characters, each with some dominant trait ; and the allegorical

(if alone accepted) would be to me the death-warrant of many an old friend.

"The vision of Arthur as I have drawn him," my father said, "had come upon me when, little more than a boy, I first lighted upon Malory";<sup>1</sup> and it dwelt with him to the end; and we may perhaps say that now the completed poem, regarded as a whole, gives his innermost being more fully, though not more truly, than "In Memoriam." He felt himself justified in having always pictured Arthur as the ideal man by such passages as this from Joseph of Exeter: "The old world knows not his peer, nor will the future show us his equal: he alone towers over other kings, better than the past ones and greater than those that are to be." So this from Alberic,

"Hic jacet Arturus, flos regum, gloria regni,  
Quem probitas morum commendat laude  
perenni."

And this from the *Brut ab Arthur*, "In short God has not made since Adam was, the man more perfect than Arthur."

My father felt strongly that only under the inspiration of ideals, and with his "sword bathed in heaven," can a man combat the cynical indifference, the intellectual selfishness, the sloth of will, the utilitarian materialism of a transition

<sup>1</sup> My father's MS.

age. “Poetry is truer than fact”<sup>1</sup> he would say. Guided by the voice within, the Ideal Soul looks out into the Infinite for the highest Ideal; and finds it nowhere realized so mightily as in the Word who “wrought With human hands the creed of creeds.” But for Arthur, as for every one who believes in the Word however interpreted, arises the question, “How can I in my little life, in my small measure, and in my limited sphere reflect this highest Ideal?” From the answer to this question come the strength of life, its beauty, and above all its helpfulness to the world.

On the other hand, having this vision of Arthur, my father thought that perhaps he had not made the real humanity of the King sufficiently clear in his epilogue; so he inserted in 1891, as his last correction, “Ideal manhood closed in real man,” before the lines :

Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,  
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain  
peak,  
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still.

Gladstone says :<sup>2</sup>

We know not where to look in history or in letters for a nobler or more overpowering conception of man as

<sup>1</sup> In this phrase he expressed what Matthew Arnold has said somewhat differently, that “Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion.”

<sup>2</sup> *Gleanings of Past Years*, vol. ii. p. 166.

he might be, than in the Arthur of this volume. Wherever he appears, it is as the great pillar of the moral order, and the resplendent top of human excellence. But even he only reaches to his climax in these two really wonderful speeches [at the end of "Guinevere"]. They will not bear mutilation : they must be read, and pondered, to be known.

To sum up : if Epic unity is looked for in the "Idylls," we find it not in the wrath of an Achilles, nor in the wanderings of an Ulysses, but in the unending war of humanity in all ages,—the world-wide war of Sense and Soul, typified in individuals, with the subtle interaction of character upon character, the central dominant figure being the pure, generous, tender, brave, human-hearted Arthur,—so that the links (with here and there symbolic accessories) which bind the "Idylls" into an artistic whole, are perhaps somewhat intricate.<sup>1</sup>

My father would explain that the great resolve (to ennoble and spiritualize mankind) is kept so long as all work in obedience to the highest and holiest law within them : in those days when all the court is one Utopia :

The King will follow Christ, and we the King,  
In whom High God has breathed a secret thing.

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Lushington called the "Idylls of the King" "Epylls of the King." According to him they were little Epics (not Idylls) woven into an Epical unity, but my father disliked the sound of the word "Epylls."

Thus in “Gareth”<sup>1</sup> the “joy of life in steepness overcome, And victories of ascent,” lives in the eternal youth of goodness. But in the later “Idylls” the allowed sin not only poisons the spring of life in the sinner, but spreads its poison through the whole community. In some natures, even among those who would “rather die than doubt,” it breeds suspicion and want of trust in God and man. Some loyal souls are wrought to madness against the world. Others, and some among the highest intellects, become the slaves of the evil which is at first half-disdained. Tender natures sink under the blight, that which is of the highest in them working their death. And in some, as faith declines, religion turns from practical goodness and holiness to superstition :

This madness has come on us for our sin.

These seek relief in selfish spiritual excitement, not remembering that man’s duty is to forget self in the service of others, and to let visions come and go, and that so only will they see “The Holy Thing.” In the Idyll of “Pelleas and Ettarre” selfishness has turned to open crime ; it is “the breaking of the storm” ; nevertheless Pelleas still honours his sacred vow to the King and spares the wrong-doers. Whereas in “The Last Tournament” the wrong-doer “suffers his

<sup>1</sup> The epitome which follows is a summary of the chief points on which my father would dwell.

doom," and "is cloven thro' the brain." We have here the deadly proof of the kinship of all wilful sin in murder following adultery in closest relation of cause and consequence,—the prelude of the final act of the tragedy which culminates in the temporary triumph of evil, the confusion of moral order, closing in the great "Battle of the West."

Throughout the poem runs my father's belief in one strong argument of hope, the marvelously transmuting power of repentance in all men, however great their sin :

As children learn, be thou  
Wiser for falling.

The lost one found was greeted as in Heaven.

Have ye look'd  
At Edyrn ? Have ye seen how nobly changed ?  
This work of his is great and wonderful,  
His very face with change of heart is changed.

So of Guinevere's repentance and the King's forgiveness : so too of the repentance of Lancelot, whose innocent worship of beauty had turned into the "guilty love," and of whom we are told that he died a "holy man." But repentance could not avert the doom of the Round Table. The "last dim weird battle" my father would quote as some of his best work, and would allow that it was a "presentment of human

death” as well as of the overthrow of the “old order” :

And ev’n on Arthur fell  
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.  
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,  
And friendslew friend not knowing whom he slew;

\* \* \* \* \*

ending with the lines :

And rolling far along the gloomy shores  
The voice of days of old and days to be.

And he liked to read the last passage in “The Passing of Arthur,” that one when Arthur himself finds the comfort of the faith with which he comforted Bedivere in his passing “from the great deep to the great deep”—for the individual man may seem to fail in his purpose, but his work cannot die—

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways ;

and that other, when Bedivere hears from the dawn, the East, whence have sprung all the great religions, the triumph of welcome given to him who has proved himself “more than conqueror” :

As from beyond the limit of the world,  
Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice  
Around a king returning from his wars.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Elaine,” “Guinevere,” “The Holy Grail,” and “The Passing of Arthur,” were his favourite “Idylls” for reading aloud :

My father made this further manuscript note on another phase of the unity of the poem. "The Coming of Arthur is on the night of the New Year ; when he is wedded 'the world is white with May' ; on a summer night the vision of the Holy Grail appears ; and the 'Last Tournament' is in the 'yellowing autumn-tide.' Guinevere flees thro' the mists of autumn, and Arthur's death takes place at midnight in mid-winter. The form of the 'Coming of Arthur' and of the 'Passing' is purposely more archaic than that of the other 'Idylls.'"

Concerning the love of Nature, shown especially in the metaphors and similes, Gladstone has a remarkable passage :

Nowhere could we more opportunely than at this point call attention to Mr. Tennyson's extraordinary felicity and force in the use of metaphor and simile.

This gift appears to have grown with his years, alike in abundance, truth and grace. As the showers descend from heaven to return to it in vapour, so Mr. Tennyson's loving observation of Nature, and his Muse, seem to have had a compact of reciprocity well kept on both sides. \* \* \* Sometimes applying the metaphors of Art to Nature, he more frequently draws the materials of his analogies from her unexhausted book, and however

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he would show that throughout each of the twelve "Idylls" his blank verse varied according to his subject. If he differentiated his style from that of any other poet, he would remark on his use of English—in preference to words derived from French and Latin. He revived many fine old words which had fallen into disuse : and I heard him regret that he had never employed the word "yarely."



often he may call for some new and beautiful vehicle of illustration, she seems never to withhold an answer. With regard to this particular and very critical gift, it seems to us that he may challenge comparison with almost any poet, either of ancient or modern times.<sup>1</sup>

Most explanations and analyses, although eagerly asked for by some readers, appeared to my father somewhat to dwarf and limit the life and scope of the great Arthurian tragedy; and therefore I will add no more, except what Jowett wrote in 1893: “Tennyson has made the Arthur legend a great revelation of human experience, and of the thoughts of many hearts.”

Some passages of the “Idylls” were first written in prose: and I find among his manuscripts prose-sketches for part of “The Holy Grail,” “Pelleas and Ettarre,” “Gareth and Lynette,” and for “Balin and Balan.” I give as a specimen the last-mentioned, which he dictated to Mr. Knowles, almost without a pause.

### *The “Dolorous Stroke”*

There came a rumour to the King of two knights who sat beside a fountain near Camelot, and had challenged every knight that passed, and overthrown them. These things were told

<sup>1</sup> Gladstone’s *Gleanings*, vol. ii. p. 159. Jowett wrote: “Tennyson may be said to have *always* lived in the presence of Nature.”

the King, and early one morning the spirit of his youth returned upon him, and he armed himself, and rode out till he came to the fountain, and there sat two knights, Balin and Balan ; and the fountain bubbled out among hart's-tongue and lady-fern, and on one side of the fountain sat Balan and on the other side sat Balin, and on the right of Balan was a poplar-tree, and on the left of Balin was an alder-tree, and the horse of Balan was tied to the poplar-tree, and the horse of Balin to the alder-tree. And Arthur said, “Fair sirs, what do ye here?” And they said, “We sit here for the sake of glory, and we be better knights than any of those in Arthur's hall, and that have we proven, for we have overthrown every knight that came forth against us.” And Arthur said, “I am of his hall ; see, therefore, whether me also ye can overthrow.” And Arthur lightly smote either of them down, and returned, and no man knew it.

Then that same day he sent for Balan and Balin, and when they were brought before him he asked them, saying, “Answer ye me this question : who be ye ?” And Balin said, “I am Balin the savage, and that name was given to me, seeing that once in mine anger I smote with my gauntlet an unarmed man in thy hall and slew him, whereupon thou didst banish me for three years from thy court as one unworthy of being of thy table. But I yearn for the light of thy presence, and the three years are nigh

fulfilled, and I have repented me of the deed that was unknighly ; and so it seemed to me that if I sat by yon fountain and challenged and overthrew every knight that passed thou wouldst receive me again into thy favour. And this is my brother Balan, not yet a knight of thine.”

Which when the King heard and saw that he had indeed repented him, he received him again and made his brother Balan knight. And the new knight demanded the first quest. And there came one into Arthur’s hall, and Balan rode away with him.

And as Balin moved about the court he marvelled at the knightliness and the manhood of Sir Lancelot, and at the worship he ever gave the Queen, and the honour in which the Queen held him. Then he thought within himself, “Surely it is this Queen’s grace and nobleness which have made him such a name among men, wherefore I too will worship the Queen an I may. And I will forget my former violences and will live anew, and I will pray the King to grant me to bear some cognisance of the Queen in the stead of mine own shield.”

And Arthur said, “Ask thou my Queen what token she will give thee, and wear thou that.” And he was bold, and asked for the Queen’s crown to wear upon his shield, and that he would amend himself, under the lustre thereof, of his old violence. So she turned her to the King and smiled and asked him, and the King

said, "Yea, so that thereby he may be holpen to amend himself." And Balin said, "The sight hereof shall evermore be bit and rein to all my savage heats." Then Balin ever hovered about Lancelot and the Queen, so that he might espy in what things stood truest knighthood and courtesy toward women. Anon he came to wonder how so great a tenderness of love might be between two such as were not lover and damosel, but ever thrust away from him such thought as a shadow from his own old life. Yet he grew somewhat gloomy of heart and presently took his shield and arms and rode privily away to seek adventure.

So, many days, he traversed the thick forests, till he came upon the ancient castle of King Pelles, and there they said to him, "Why wearest thou this crown royal on thy shield?" and he answered them, "Because the noblest and the chastest of all ladies hath granted me to wear it." So at the high banquet in the hall sat one Sir Garlon, who likewise said, "Why wearest thou a Queen's crown royal?" Unto him Sir Balin made the same answer. Whereat Sir Garlon grimly smiled and said, "Art thou so simple, and hast yet come but now, as thou sayest, from the court? Hast thou not eyes, or at the least ears, and dost not know the thing that standeth (shame that groweth) between Lancelot and the Queen?" To which Sir Balin fiercely answered, "Yea surely, because I

have both eyes and ears and because I have diligently used them to learn how he, the greatest of all knights, doth gain his valour from the noblest of all ladies, I know that such a thing as this thou sayest is but a foul thing and a felon's talk.” But none the less Sir Garlon's talk made him full heavy and gloomy of heart, so that he wandered to and fro among the churls, and there heard marvellous tales. For they told him that Sir Garlon rode invisible and had wounded unto death many strong and good knights, striking them through the back, and they warned him to beware of Sir Garlon.

Also they told him how that King Pelles was the true descendant of Joseph of Arimathea, and also how in hidden chambers of the castle lay wondrous treasures from the days of our Lord Christ—even the spear which ever bled since Longus smote our Lord withal, and many more such marvels, till Sir Balin doubted him whether he could believe aught that they told him of Sir Garlon or aught else. But on the morrow when Sir Garlon met him by the Castle walls and mocked him, saying, “Still then thou wearest that shameful token—that crown scandalous,” then did Sir Balin's old nature break through its new crust, and he smote him on the helmet with his sword. But though he overthrew and left him lying, yet his sword was broken into divers pieces, so that he cast the handle from him, and ran hastily to find some

other weapon. For by now he saw men running upon him from the castle, and thought but to flee and to fight for his life. And as he fled he saw within a loophole window where a stack of spears lay piled, and burst the door and caught the tallest of them all, and, crying to his war-horse, leaped upon him and departed. And as he went he heard the voice of King Pelles to his knights: "Stay, stay him: he defileth holy things beyond his wit to know of." But being hot and fleet with madness he plunged far into the woods, and drew no rein until his horse was nigh to dying. Then did he spy his golden crown and bemoaned himself, saying, "Alas that I should so soon turn as a dog to his vomit! Alas! for now were I wounded with the bleeding spear itself, and of a wound that should for ever bleed, I could be none too wounded for my deserts."

So there as he lay bitter of heart he turned the shield away from him, not bearing to look upon it, and hung it to a bough hard by, and there it glistened in the sun the while he turned the other way and raged, and felt that he would dwell a savage man for evermore within the woods.

But anon came through the woods a damsel riding on a palfrey, and but a single squire attending. And when she saw the shield she stayed her horse and called her squire to search for him who owned it, for she marvelled to see Queen Guinevere's crown thereon.

Then when she had found Sir Balin she demanded straightway that he should help her through the woods, for that she was journeying to King Mark of Cornwall, and her good knight had met some misadventure and had left her with none but this squire. “And I know thee for a worshipful man and one from Arthur’s hall, for I see by this cognisance that thou art from the court.” Then did Sir Balin redden and say, “Ask me not of it, for I have shamed it. Alas! that so great a Queen’s name, which high Sir Lancelot hath lifted up, and been lifted up by, should through me and my villainy come to disgrace!” Thereon the damsel, looking keenly at him, laughed, and when he asked her why, laughed long and loud, and cried that little shame could he do to the Queen or Lancelot either which they had not themselves already done themselves.

And when he stood as Lot’s wife stood, salt-petrified, and stared at her, she cried again, “Sir Knight, ye need not gaze thus at me as if I were a redeer of fables and a teller of false tales. Now let me tell thee how I saw myself Sir Lancelot and the Queen within a bower at Camelot but twelve months since and heard her say, ‘O sir, my lord Sir Lancelot, for thou indeed art my true lord, and none other save by the law.’”

But when he heard her thus, his evil spirit leapt upon him and tare him and drove him

mad, and then he cried with a great yell, and dragged the shield from off the tree, and then and there he cast it to the ground, drave his mailed foot through the midst of it, and split the royal crown in twain, and cast the two halves far from him among the long weeds of the wood. Then at that cry came Balan riding through the forest, and when he saw the broken shield and crown lie on the earth he spurred his horse and said, "Sir Knight, keep well thyself, for here is one shall overthrow thee for the despite thou hast done the Queen!" At that Sir Balin, for he knew not that it was Sir Balan, seeing that his newly granted shield had yet no bearing, called to the squire to lend him his shield, and, catching up the spear he gat from Pelles' castle, ran his horse fiercely to meet Sir Balan. And so sore was their onset that either overthrew the other to the earth; but Balin's spear smote through Sir Balan's shield and made the first mark it had ever borne, and through the rent it pierced to Balan's side and thrust him through with deadly wounds, wherefrom the blood streamed and could not be stayed until he fainted with the loss of blood; and Balin's horse rolled on him as he fell, and wounded him so sorely that he swooned with agony.

But when they thus lay, the damsel and her squire unlaced their helms and gave them air, and presently when they came to themselves they gazed as men gone newly wild upon each



other, and with a mighty cry they either swooned away again, and so lay swooning for an hour. Then did the damsel wait and watch to see how this might end, and withdrew herself behind the leaves.

Anon Sir Balin opened first his eyes, and then with groanings which he could not hide for pain he slowly crawled to where his brother lay. And then did he put from off his brother's face his hair, and leaned and kissed him, and left his face beblooded from his lips, for by now his life began to flow away from his hidden inner wounds.

Then presently thereafter Balan woke up also from his swoon, and when he saw his brother so hang over him he flung his arm about his neck and drew his face again down to him and said lowly in his ear, “Alas, alas, mine own dear brother, that I should thus have given thee thy death! But wherefore hadst thou no shield, and wherefore was it rent asunder and defiled? O brother! for it grieveth me more than death to see this thing.” Then did Sir Balin tell him all that Sir Garlon and afterwards the damsel had told him of the Queen, and when Sir Balan heard it he moaned greatly and cried out that Garlon was a felon knight, well known about those marches for his evil deeds and lies, and the damsel he well believed, if she were going to King Mark, was as bad as he. “Perchance Sir Garlon,” said he, “was

the very knight she said had left her: and would I could find her or her squire," he said, "for even dead man as I am I fain would now abolish her, lest she work more evil than this dolorous stroke she hath caused betwixt us two."

When the damsel heard them thus speak, she feared for her life lest the wounded knight might be recovered and might find her, and stealthily she sped away to King Mark and after to Arthur's court, and there she told how she had overheard from Knights of Arthur's Table scandal beyond all disproof about Sir Lancelot and the Queen. And thus in truth the Dolorous Stroke was struck, which first shook to its base the stately order of the Table Round.

Then when the damsel left them came the Lady of the Lake and found Sir Balin and Sir Balan at their last breaths, and caused them to be solemnly buried, and sang above them an high song.

## CHAPTER VI

### MY MOTHER'S JOURNAL, AND LETTERS 1873-74

*The Revenge, Connaught, Dr. Tennyson in Russia,  
Macugnaga, London, Cambridge*

ON March 6th my father went to Windsor, in obedience to a command from the Queen ; and he wrote to my mother : "The visit to Windsor went off very well, and we were first ushered into a long corridor in the Castle. There the Queen came, and was very kindly, asking after all at home, pitying Lady Simeon [for the loss of Sir John]. We talked too of Romanism and Protestantism. Then I walked with the Dean and Lady Augusta to Frogmore, and pottered about till the Queen and Princess Beatrice arrived. The Queen took me into the building and explained everything."

On March 9th he met Mr. Markham (now Sir Clements Markham), the secretary of the Hakluyt Society, who had undertaken to give him all information about Sir Richard Grenville ; and he wrote to my mother : "Sir Richard Gren-

ville in one ship, 'the Revenge,' fought fifty-three Spanish ships of the line for fifteen hours: a tremendous story, out-rivalling Agincourt."

The line, "At Florés in the Azorés Sir Richard Grenville lay," was on my father's desk for years, but he finished the ballad at last all at once in a day or two.

When he returned from London, he read the account of Sir Richard Grenville in Froude. A telegram arrived saying that the Dean was commanded by the Queen to ask whether, if some honour were offered to A., it would be acceptable. A. wrote that he did not himself care for any honour except as a symbol of the Queen's kindness. The old life had been too good to desire any change even in outward things.

*March 17th.* Professor Tyndall and Mr. Huxley called. Mr. Huxley seemed to be universal in his interest and to have keen enjoyment of life. He spoke of "In Memoriam."<sup>1</sup> Professor Tyndall and Dr. (now Sir Joseph) Hooker came to tea. Lord Dufferin's letter to A., telling of the happy effect that his words about the "True North" in the Epilogue to the "Idylls" have had in Canada, pleased him. It is a blessing to think that they may have done good, and helped somewhat to a more perfect union of England with her Colonies.—

OTTAWA, *Feb. 25th, 1873.*

MY DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

I cannot help writing a line to thank you on behalf of the generous and loyal people whose govern-

<sup>1</sup> "He (Huxley) once spoke strongly of the insight into scientific method shown in Tennyson's 'In Memoriam.'"—"Thomas Henry Huxley," by Wilfrid Ward, *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1896.

ment I am now administering, for the spirited denunciation with which you have branded those who are seeking to dissolve the Empire, and to alienate and disgust the inhabitants of this most powerful and prosperous colony. Since arriving here I have had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with the intimate convictions of the Canadians upon this subject, and with scarcely an individual exception, I find they cling with fanatical tenacity to their birthright as Englishmen, and to their hereditary association in the past and future glories of the mother country. Though for two or three generations his family may have been established in this country, and he himself has never crossed the Atlantic, a Canadian seldom fails to allude to England as "Home." They take the liveliest interest in her welfare, and entertain the strongest personal feeling of affection for their Sovereign.

Moreover it must be remembered that these sentiments are perfectly unselfish and disinterested. Not a penny of British money is spent in the country, and some imagine their purely material interests might be benefited by annexation to the States. On the other hand the assertion that their connection with Great Britain weakens their self-confidence or damps the ardour of Canadian Nationality is a pure invention. Amongst no people have I ever met more contentment with their general condition, a more legitimate pride in all those characteristics which constitute their nationality, or a firmer faith in the destinies in store for them. Your noble words have struck responsive fire from every heart; they have been published in every newspaper, and have been completely effectual to heal the wounds occasioned by the senseless language of the *Times*.

I hope you will forgive me for thus troubling you,

but you have invariably shown me so much kindness and indulgence, that I cannot resist my inclination to let you know how deeply all in this "True North" feel indebted to you.

Yours sincerely, DUFFERIN.

*To Lord Dufferin*

*February, 1873.*

MY DEAR LORD DUFFERIN,

Since you have so near an interest in "that true North," I thought it might not displease you to receive from myself my lines to the Queen. I send therefore the two volumes of the "Idylls" containing them, with the assurance of the great interest we take in your work there, and our best wishes that it may prosper, and you and yours also.

Believe me, yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

*From Lord Dufferin*

*CANADA, March 3rd, 1873.*

MY DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

I cannot say how inexpressibly delighted I have been by the arrival of your two noble volumes, or how deeply I feel your kindness in having remembered me. I am all the more pleased, as by the previous mail I had already written to tell you of the happy effect produced in Canada by the glorious lines with which the "Idylls of the King" conclude. Canada may well

be proud that her loyal aspirations should be thus imperishably recorded in the greatest poem of this generation.

Ever yours sincerely and gratefully, DUFFERIN.

*March 25th.* This day brought the kindest of letters from Mr. Gladstone, offering a baronetcy from the Queen. "Nothing can be kinder," wrote A., "than your letter, and I shall always treasure it; but will you allow me to meditate your proposal for a day or two before returning a definite answer?" The following reply was subsequently sent :

*March 30th.*

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

I do not like to trouble you about my own personal matters in the midst of your absorbing public work ; but not only on account of my feeling for yourself, but also for the sake of that memory<sup>1</sup> which we share, I speak frankly to you when I say that I had rather we should remain plain Mr. and Mrs., and that, if it were possible, the title should first be assumed by our son at any age it may be thought right to fix upon : but like enough this is against all precedent, and could not be managed : and on no account would I have suggested it, were there the least chance of the Queen's construing it into a slight of the proffered honour. I hope that I have too much of the old-world loyalty left in me not to wear my lady's favours against all comers, should you think that it would be more

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Hallam was the friend of both.

agreeable to Her Majesty that I should do so. \* \* \*

Believe me yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

Mr. Gladstone answered that to give Hallam a baronetcy during his father's lifetime would be an innovation, but that the innovation *might be* attempted.

On April 16th my father again wrote to Mr. Gladstone :

Accept my thanks for having made clear my wish and my motives to the Queen. Now that I have Her Majesty's sanction as well as your own, I am not likely to change my mind on the subject. Hallam, to whom we have spoken regarding it since my last, would not like to wear the honour during my lifetime. For the rest I leave myself in your hands, being quite sure that you will do what is best and when best. You have much good work, I trust, to accomplish before the time of your retirement from office.

With kindest regards from my wife and myself,  
I am yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*May 8th.* Mr. Browning's *Red Cotton Nightcap Country* came from himself.

Among the lines which my father liked were  
"Palatial gloomy chambers for parade,  
And passage lengths of lost significance,"



and he praised the simile about the man with his dead comrade in the lighthouse. He wrote to Mr. Browning :

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,  
ISLE OF WIGHT, *May 8th*, 1873.

MY DEAR R. B.,

My wife has just cut the leaves. I have yet again to thank you, and feel rather ashamed that I have nothing of my own to send you back, but your Muse is prolific as Hecuba, and mine by the side of her, an old barren cow.

Yours ever, A. T.

*June 10th.* The Bishop of Winchester [Wilberforce], Bishop of Albany and others. Six Americans tramped up the drive and rang at the door-bell, and asked to see A. He did not feel up to entertaining six strange Americans, so rushed up the tower followed by the two bishops—but eventually asked the Bishop of Winchester to go down and receive them, saying, “A live Bishop will be much more appreciated than a Poet Laureate.” So down the Bishop went from the study, and made himself most agreeable, and they departed charmed. Before, he seemed to be only brilliant, but to-day, he seemed more like an old friend, full of strength, earnestness, and wide knowledge.

A. repeated this anecdote of his once being driven by “the King of Connaught.”

“The waiter at the inn told me that there was a stream that leapt down Hungry Head clear for several hundred feet. I accordingly ordered out a car, and before I had gone far, the carman began to talk to me, and pulled out a great seal from his pocket and said, ‘Do

you know those arms, your honour?' I answered, 'No,' and he said, 'These are the MacCarthy More, and the Sullivan! great names, your honour!' I assented, and he continued, 'If I had my rights I should be king of Connaught.' I daresay that he would be. We drove on, and it began to rain in cataracts, and we got drenched, and went into an Irish shanty where there were a woman and her little son. The king dried my stockings and went to sleep on a bench. The woman drew me up a stool to the turf fire with the courtly air of a queen. While he was asleep, I heard the mother say to the boy 'Johnny' several times (she didn't speak a word of English). The king awoke, and, as we were going out, I said 'Johnny,' and the little boy with a protuberant paunch (protuberant I suppose from eating potatoes) ran forward, and I gave him a sixpence. The woman, with her black hair over her shoulders, and her eyes streaming with tears, passionately closed her hands over the boy's hand in which was the sixpence. When the king and I climbed into the car, I, in my stupid Saxon way, thinking it was the beggarly sixpence that had made the woman grateful, expressed my astonishment at such gratitude. He said, 'It was not the sixpence, your honour, it was the stranger's gift.' We drove on to the waterfall. It was, as I expected, a poor affair, and trickled down the side of the mountain, tho' in full flood after rain it might have leapt some hundred feet or so clear of the rock. When we returned to the inn, the waiter said to the king, who was a jolly good fellow, 'Have you been telling the gentleman of your great blood?' and he drew himself up, answering, 'The gentleman is a gentleman, every inch of him.'"

Then A. told the thrilling story of his father's stay in Russia : how, as a very young man, he was dining with

our English Minister, Lord St. Helens, at St. Petersburg, when he said, across a Russian, to Lord St. Helens, "It is perfectly well known in England who murdered the Emperor Paul : it was Count So and So." Whereat a dead silence fell on the company. After dinner Lord St. Helens called Dr. Tennyson aside and said, "Ride for your life from this city : the man across whom you were speaking to me was the Count So and So, whom you accused of murdering the Emperor Paul." Dr. Tennyson took horse and rode for weeks and weeks through Russia, till he came to the Crimea where he fell ill. He became delirious, and remembered the wild country-people dancing round his bed with magical incantations. Once in every three months an English courier passed through this village where he lay ill, and as he passed through the village blew a horn. It all depended on Dr. Tennyson's hearing this horn whether he could escape from Russia, for he had no money. In his delirium he would perpetually start up agonized lest he had missed it. At last the courier came, the horn was blown and he heard the sound, and applied to the courier to take him. The courier agreed, and Dr. Tennyson journeyed with him. He was a drunken fellow and dropt all his despatches on the road. Dr. Tennyson picked them up, but did not say that he had done so. The courier was in despair, and at last Dr. Tennyson gave them to him, with a warning that he must not be drunken in future. At one frontier town the sentries had barred the gates, because it was late night. The courier, not to be daunted, shouted out "Le duc de York." An immediate unbarring ensued, and the sentinels all sprang to attention, and saluted him with deference. So, after less drunkenness on the part of the courier, and many adventures, they managed to reach England.

*August and September.* A. and Hallam went off to Pontresina, thence to the Italian lakes, Val Sesia, and Val d' Anzasca. Hallam writes :

"*Sept. 4th.* Val d' Anzasca. All to-day Monte Rosa has been wrapped in cloud, except at 5 o'clock this morning when we had a beautiful view. Above fold on fold of mountain, covered with walnuts and vines, rose the pinnacles of Monte Rosa, flushed with the morning sun, and slowly becoming bright gold. He has begun a poem, 'The Voice and the Peak,'<sup>1</sup> describing the torrent in this valley,

Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn.

The Val d' Anzasca is, he thinks, *the grandest valley that he has seen in the Alps*. He is in good spirits and quoting the *Cinque Maggio* of Manzoni.

*Sept. 5th.* Ponte Grande. Last night saw the mountains silvered with moonlight over black pines. This morning walked back from Macugnaga, going to Domo d' Ossola.

Bauer-Sierre. Returned through Domo d' Ossola over the Simplon. The coming over was a great disappointment. Thick mist the whole of the way except the first half-hour when we started from the Simplon Inn. He was full of these lines on the Simplon by Wordsworth :

'The immeasurable height  
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,  
The stationary blast of waterfalls,  
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,  
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn.'

<sup>1</sup> Included, with "England and America," in the Cabinet Edition, 1873-74.

During the evening we consoled ourselves by reading *Lélia* by George Sand: whose *Consuelo* and *Petite Fadette* were favourites of his. Nothing was to be heard at night thro' the mist but the shrill ticking of a church clock, which sounded, he said, 'in the thick darkness like the cry of a dying man.' He says he once lived near a stable clock which he never *heard* but which he *felt*, most ghostlywise, through the boards.

*Sept. 10th.* Arrived at Neufchâtel: deep-coloured rainbow over the lake. He has been telling me that 'the only cheerful thing he ever saw in going home by coach over the flats from Cambridge to Lincolnshire was the gray line of dawn over Whittlesea mere.' Every foreigner seems to talk of nothing else but the Tichborne trial."

From Neufchâtel they returned straight home.

*Seamore Place, London*

Early in November my father received the following letter from a stranger (who did not sign his name). The letter and the packet of flowers sent with it greatly touched him.

CHATHAM, U.S. AMERICA,  
25th October, 1873.

MY DEAR SIR,

These "nurslings" of our fall and summer skies, which, thinking of you, I plucked, I send as messengers of the love and respect and affection, nay the gratitude, which I bear to one whom God has so greatly blessed with such good gifts, with so true an eye, so exquisite an ear for all sights and sounds of this our beautiful and mysterious world.

Could I express in words all that I owe to you, all those pleasures and delights of the past, which seem so interwoven with words and scenes and thoughts of your making, I might seem almost untruthful, or at least prone to exaggeration. Yet I can say in all truth that the purest and truest pleasures of my life have been derived from you.

The times have been very bitter to most of us, and we still suffer from the results of our disastrous conflict, and the terrible pressure, but we think that we are just beginning to see the dawn, or we hope so at any rate. Going to my daily work this fall through the pine lands, all purple and golden, and looking too over "the happy autumn fields" with their rich harvest, I seemed to feel happier than for many a year since that bitter time from which we date so many evils.

I thought of that delightful time still further back, old college times, those famous discussions in which you too seemed to take a part: while round us "All the thickets rang to many a flute of Arcady."

Many of those companions and friends sleep their last sleep in the far West, but some are left.

I thought to myself (but it may be a weak thought, born of sentiment or weakness) that these words from a far-off land, these humble flowers from the same, might please you. Certainly it is a thought of pleasure to me that your eye will rest on them, mayhap but for a moment, that your hand may touch them. That all things good may attend you and yours now and for all time, is my hearty prayer.

I am, with respect and gratitude,

Your very obliged

\* \* \*

Oct. 28th. London. 4 Seamore Place. We took up our abode at Seamore Place in the house we shared with Lady Franklin, and A. likes it the best of any house we have had in London. He is reading a metaphysical book by Hinton<sup>1</sup> who is an aurist by profession, and who on giving a prescription one day wrote (so absorbed was he in the mysteries of the universe), "To be rubbed round the world night and morning."

Nov. 8th. A. and the boys went with Annie Thackeray to Irving's *Richelieu*.

He did not care for *Richelieu*, but one thing he remembered, after the play was over, as good :

"Ye safe and formal men  
Who write the deeds and with unfeverish hand  
Weigh in nice scales the motives of the great."

He described to Irving his conception of the manner in which "Hamlet" ought to be acted.

Mrs. Thackeray Ritchie wrote of a similar evening in 1874 after *Hamlet* :

The play was over, and we ourselves seemed a part of it still ; here were the players, and our own prince poet, in that familiar simple voice we all know, explaining the art, going straight to the point in his own down-right fashion, criticising with delicate appreciation, by the irresistible force of truth and true instinct carrying all before him. "You are a good actor lost," one of them, the real actors, said to him, laughing as he spoke.

<sup>1</sup> He was also reading *The Mystery of Matter* by J. A. Picton, and *The Materialism of the Present Day* by Paul Janet.

The parts of Irving's *Hamlet* which my father thought best were the dreamy and poetical sides, and when he showed the "method in his madness as well as the madness in his method." To Irving he said, "*Hamlet* is a many-faceted gem, and you have given more facets than any one I have seen."

He was daily at Mr. Woolner's studio because of the new bust.<sup>1</sup>

*Nov. 15th.* A. went to Cambridge.

He had lunches and dinners, and walks, with Trinity fellows and undergraduates, and was as happy as a boy.

He was full of reminiscences too : remarking, for instance, how he had idealized Nevile's Court in "The Princess" : and how the "six hundred maidens clad in purest white" was taken from the striking memory of the white-surpliced undergraduates in Trinity Chapel ; and he described the effect of the Trinity organ upon him :

While the great organ almost burst his pipes,  
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court  
A long melodious thunder to the sound  
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies.

<sup>1</sup> In 1894 the people of Freshwater generously wished to buy this bust (which represented my father with his beard) and to place it in their church, but Mrs. Woolner reserved it for some public gallery.



He said : "I see a ghost of a friend in every corner of the old place."

On his return Mr. Furnivall called about the Shakespeare Society, which he wishes to found, and to make A. president. This honour he has declined, hating to push himself forward as a learned Shakespearean, but he has agreed to join the Society.

The boys walked with him to call on Mr. Carlyle, who thought that we were to be ruined by a "government of party, headed by a gentleman Jew who sits at the top of chaos." However he preferred Disraeli to Gladstone. Mr. Carlyle called upon me, and was very interesting and touching about old days, and was afraid of tiring me by over-talking.

Edward FitzGerald wrote :

MY DEAR ALFRED,

I write my yearly letter to yourself this time, because I have a word to say about "Gareth" which your publisher sent me as "from the author." I don't think it is mere perversity that makes me like it better than all its predecessors, save and except (of course) the old "Morte." The subject, the young knight who can endure and conquer, interests me more than all the heroines of the 1st volume. I do not know if I admire more *separate* passages in this "Idyll" than in the others ; for I have admired *many* in *all*. But I do admire several here very much, as

The journey to Camelot, pp. 13-14,  
All Gareth's vassalage, 31-34,  
Departure with Lynette, 42,  
Sitting at table with the Barons, 54,  
Phantom of past life, 71,

and many other passages and expressions "quæ nunc perscribere longum est." I doubt that Mrs. A. T. will have to let me know how you all of you are. I suppose got back to your Island by this time. Your eldest boy at Cambridge too! I won't write any more in mercy to your eyes as well as mine. But I am

Yours and wife's always devotedly,

E. F. G.

*December.* A. went with Hallam to see Lady Martin (Helen Faucit) in *As You Like It*. Her 'Rosalind,' he felt, had great distinction. He held that one of the most exquisite things for simplicity and eloquence in Shakespeare is Rosalind's saying to Orlando,

"Sir, you have wrestled well  
And overthrown more than your enemies."

*Dec. 19th.* Mr. Browning dined with us. He was very affectionate and delightful. It was a great pleasure to hear Mr. Browning's words—that he had not had so happy a time for a long while as since we have been in town.

We have been troubled again by publishing affairs. It is a pity that these splittings up of partnership drive A. from one publisher to another. Let us hope however that he has found a steadfast publisher in Mr. King, with whom he may stay to the end. That he is most liberal there can be no doubt.

A. wrote to Mr. Gladstone about Mr. Furnivall's Shakespeare Society: "As to Furnivall I believe him to be a hard-working, painstaking, conscientious man. . . . I have refused the Presidency and even a Vice-Presidency of the Shakespeare Society. I am now merely a subscriber, though I have promised, if need

## MY MOTHER'S JOURNAL 1874

be, to give them a donation. I think you cannot do better than subscribe. . . .”

1874

*My mother's journal.*—“*Welcome to Alexandrovna,*”  
“*Queen Mary,*” *Pyrenees, Letters and Recollections*

“Old Brooks” [W. H. Brookfield], A.’s old and true friend, has passed away. A. wrote to Mrs. Brookfield :

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,  
ISLE OF WIGHT, *Jan. 18th, 1874.*

MY DEAR JANE,

You will believe that I feel with you, and that I feel that the *dead* lives whatever the pseudo-savants say, and so

May God bless you and yours.

A. T.

After Mr. Gladstone had announced the dissolution of Parliament at Greenwich, A. wrote to him :

*Feb. 17th, 1874.*

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

We have, I need not say, been pained and disgusted at much that has occurred within the last few days ; but action and reaction are the law of the world, for which one sometimes hates the world, tho’ such a law is, I believe, in the main wholesome for the common weal. Care not, you have done great work, and if even

1874 DEATH OF LADY HOUGHTON

now you rested, your name would be read in one of the fairest pages of English history. I say this, however on some points of policy we may have differed. \* \* \*

Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

And on March 6th to Lord Houghton, on the death of Lady Houghton :

MY DEAR HOUGHTON,

I was the other day present at a funeral here, and one of the chief mourners reached me her hand silently almost over the grave, and I as silently gave her mine. No words were possible ; and this little note, that can do really nothing to help you in your sorrow, is just such a reaching of the hand to you, my old college comrade of more than forty years' standing, to show you that I think of you. You have your children ; she must live to you more or less in them, and to you and others in the memory and result of her good and charitable life : and I may say that I think I can see as far as one can see in this twilight, that the nobler nature does not pass from its individuality when it passes out of this one life. If you could believe as much, it would be a comfort to you, and perhaps you do. I did not intend to say even so much as this, and will say no more, only that

I am yours affectionately,

A. TENNYSON.

*March 11th.* I persuaded A. to go to town to see to-morrow's procession (the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh entering London after their marriage), he having never seen London in festival. We had had telegrams from Windsor saying that they all liked the "Welcome to Alexandrovna."<sup>1</sup> A. talked of making a play of "Lady Jane Grey."

[A. wrote: *March 12th.* Here it began to snow early in the morning and was snowing when we started at 10 o'clock for Regent Street, where K. had hired seats for the show; fortunately the snow just ceased falling a little before the Queen passed. How she and the Princess did shake their heads incessantly right and left, as if they had necks of india-rubber, and that for miles. The people were very enthusiastic, but the lack of sunshine took away all the splendour from the house-decorations and the helmets. The Princess looked large and imperial, I thought. People say that the accent is on the antepenultimate, Alexandrovna. If so, it rather spoils my chorus.

*March 17th.* Sir Samuel and Lady Baker, Dr. Quain, and Mr. Leland (the American author of the *Breitmann Ballads*, very humorous) came to dinner. Lady Baker is plump and pretty, and does not look as if she had gone thro' all that in Africa among the savages. I have not called anywhere as yet, and I think I may come home at the end of the week. There is another party to-day here and I wish there was not, and another to-morrow at Knowles' and I wish there was not.

*March 21st.* Dined at Lady Franklin's and met Stanley, the Livingstone finder.]

*March 30th.* Review of the Ashantee troops by the

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the *Times*, March 7th, 1874, and on separate sheets.

Queen at Windsor. We are glad that the Government have taken strenuous steps to relieve the famine in Bengal. A. returned: another photograph of him by Mayall.

*April 10th.* Professor Tyndall, and the Claud Hamiltons, and Sir John Lubbock called. Lately we have been reading Holinshed and Froude's *Mary*, for A. has been thinking about a play of "Queen Mary," and has sketched two or three scenes. For a time he had thought of "William the Silent,"<sup>1</sup> but he said that our own history was so great, and that he liked English subjects best, and knew most about them, and that consequently he should do "Queen Mary."

Mr. K— wrote that he wanted A. to do a play of "The Armada," or rather to make a sort of panoramic view of Edward's, Mary's and Elizabeth's reigns, but that would be impracticable.<sup>2</sup>

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*Popularity*

*(an unpublished impromptu, made about this time)*

Popular, Popular, Unpopular!

"You're no Poet"—the critics cried!

"Why?" said the Poet. "You're unpopular!"

Then they cried at the turn of the tide—

"You're no Poet!" "Why?"—"You're popular!"

Pop-gun, Popular and Unpopular!

---

<sup>1</sup> He had been reading Motley's *Dutch Republic*.

<sup>2</sup> He wrote a few lines of a play on "Elizabeth," in which he had imagined a great Armada scene.

*Tour in France*

In the summer of this year we went to Paris and St. Germain. When in Paris, A. saw some plays at the Théâtre Français, and especially admired Got, the Coquelins, and Mlle. Reichenberg. [From Mlle. Reichenberg in *L'École des Femmes* he took the idea of his "Margery" in "Becket." He looked upon Molière's plays as great works of art, and said, "The *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* contained the germ of the French Revolution."] We afterwards stayed at Tours, where A. and Hallam left myself and Lionel, and proceeded to the Pyrenees.

The sight of the cleft peak of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau A. thought "grand" from the head of the valley, and made an outline sketch of it. "The Pyrenees," he said, "look much more Homeric than the Alps." Many of the mountains are wooded up to the summit.

On our return I had to answer many letters from unknown correspondents, asking advice from A. as to religious questions, and desiring criticism of poems, etc., and I became very ill,<sup>1</sup> and could do but little, so my journal ends here. After a time Hallam came home from Cambridge to help A. in reading books for him, writing letters, and in his work generally.

*[End of my mother's journal]*

<sup>1</sup> My mother was never strong, but after this she was almost entirely confined to her sofa. The Master of Trinity (Dr. Butler) writes to me (Aug. 13th, 1896): "Your mother's life has been one of exceptional beauty and power. How few will ever be able to estimate all she did, while lying for years on that sofa. It always seemed to me a kind of sanctuary, from which issued words of the 'Sursum corda' order, words of patriotism, and fearlessness, and faith."

*Letters of this Period*

Among the letters of this year is the following rough copy of part of a letter from my father to some one unnamed :

*May 7th, 1874.*

SIR,

I have to thank you for your essay and your photograph ; the face is that of one born to grapple with difficulties, metaphysical or other ; and the essay does not belie the face—a vigorous subtle résumé of metaphysic, ending yet once again in the strange history of the human race, with the placid Buddha, as verified by the xixth Century anæsthetics. But what need you my praise when you have secured the approval of him, who is by report our greatest or one of our greatest Hegelians, whereas I have but a gleam of Kant, and have hardly turned a page of Hegel, almost all that I know of him having come to me “obiter” and obscurely thro’ the talk of others ; and I have never delivered myself to dialectics.

With respect to anæsthetic treatment, I cannot say my slight experience of chloroform (the only anæsthetic I have ever tried) has tended to confirm what you advance.

I was in Scotland about the time when Dr. Simpson brought chloroform into use, and I had a slight but very painful operation on the nail of the great toe to undergo, and the friend with



whom I was staying urged me to try Simpson's prescription. When I came out of the trance, I took the surgeon for the waiter of Gliddon's cigar divan, a place which has disappeared from the face of the world whole decades ago, and where I had been once, or perhaps twice, many years before, and thro' all those years, as far as I know, the recollection of my one or two visits had never occurred to me.

Then, seeing my foot bare, I said to the surgeon, "Where the deuce have you put my stocking and boot? do you think I can walk thro' the streets barefoot?" Immediately after this I laughed, and said, "Oh, I see." I could not but conclude that, during the operation, the mind had been passing thro' a little history and had arrived easily and "gradatim" at this all-but-forgotten Gliddon's cigar divan. To be sure, the friend who held my hand and supplied the handkerchief, told me that first of all I bolted out a long metaphysical term, which he could not re-word to me.

A. TENNYSON.

*To F. T. Palgrave (about the tour in France)*

FARRINGFORD,  
October 16th, 1874.

DEAR PALGRAVE,

We had not much of a tour. We stayed a week in Paris and then went on to St.

Germain, which she found too cold for her ; then to Tours, where we stopt some weeks at the Hôtel de l'Univers, but where it was still very blustering and by no means warm. Some Italians, who were at the inn with us, said the cold made them shudder.

I and Hallam started for a few days to the Pyrenees, leaving the wife and Lionel at Tours. I remembered seeing, from the Esplanade at Pau, the cleft peak of the Dent du Midi d'Ossau far away ; and steamed away south to make a nearer acquaintance with that, and found him worth seeing ; then to Caunteretz, where I had been twice before, and to Gavarnie. So after a few days returned to Tours, and then home, not much of a tour. As for the "May Queen," King and Co. hire my copyright for five years : you must ask them.

I congratulate you upon the birth of your fourth daughter, and am

Yours ever,

A. TENNYSON.

We shall take no house in London this winter, and I cannot tell you when I shall be there.

The following was in answer to a letter about two fine lines (in E. F. G.'s "Omar Khayyám") which my father greatly admired ; FitzGerald had taken into his head that my father had said they had been "copied from some

lines in 'The Gardener's Daughter.'"<sup>1</sup> The lines were

"The stars are setting, and the caravan  
Starts for the dawn of nothing ! O make haste !"

DEAR MRS. TENNYSON,

I had really meant to write again to Alfred this evening ; to say that I repented of having bothered him about "Omar"! His [Alfred's] letter is come to-day however : and I am glad that he is not bothered at all and for the best of reasons : having no alternative to be bothered with.

I had meant to say besides, that what I asked him about "Omar" had reminded me of what I had often thought and meant to say about a very different thing indeed ; namely two of that "paltry Poet's" own wretched effusions : the "Gardener's and Miller's Daughters" : of which I have always thought he should reprint the *first drafts*. I do not say they were better than the accepted copies : I do not think they are : but there are I think some things better in them ; some, at any rate, which should not be lost. There was something more of the "Wine and Walnut" vein of recollection in the first edition of the Miller story, and I still retain in my copy the opening stanza (partially altered by the paltry one himself) beginning—

I met in all the close green ways,  
While walking with my *rod and line*<sup>2</sup>—

---

<sup>1</sup> The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing !

<sup>2</sup> See quotation in vol. i. p. 152.

the paltry one having been frightened out of "line and rod" by C. North. Then there was a touch of *Titian landscape* (I guessed it, and was right) in the "Gardener," "Autumn touching the fallows,"<sup>1</sup> etc., which I thought and think threw the living figures better into relief than the Daughters of the Year, who now pass thro' the Garden. I repeat that I do not maintain the poem is not altogether improved by the change, which would be setting my wits against a very poor bird, but I should publish, for posterity to see, the first draft of both these paltry poems.

When I look at the *Athenæum* I see there are at least four poets scarce inferior to Dante, Shakespeare, etc., Browning, Morris, D. G. Rossetti, Miss Do. They will have their day.

But when I talk so, my bile is invariably on fire. *I! I!* crib from the "Gardener," which the paltry poet charges me with! Oh, Dem! But really, I should like to hear what this *Paltry-Innuendo-maker* alludes to: if it be any gloss of mine on "Omar," very little doubt it came from some of those paltry poems: but if it *should* be old Omar, not even the spite of a poet *inferior* to *Browning* can accuse the old Persian of theft. I should like to find that the *so-called* poet had jumped at one thought. So do tell me what *rankles* in poor Alfred's mind, and I will relieve him at once.

Ever your E. FITZGERALD.

On December 29th the Queen, through Mr. Disraeli, offered my father a baronetcy.

<sup>1</sup> See quotation in vol. i. p. 256.

*From the Right Hon. B. Disraeli*

BOURNEMOUTH, *Dec. 29th*, 1874.

DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

A government should recognize intellect. It elevates and sustains the spirit of a nation. But it is an office not easy to fulfil, for if it falls into favouritism and the patronage of mediocrity, instead of raising the national sentiment, it might degrade and debase it. Her Majesty, by the advice of Her Ministers, has testified in the Arctic expedition, and will in other forms, her sympathy with science. But it is desirable that the claims of high letters should be equally acknowledged. This is not so easy a matter, because it is in the nature of things, that the test of merit cannot be so precise in literature as in science. Nevertheless there are some living names, however few, which I would fain believe will reach posterity, and yours is among the foremost. I should be glad, therefore, if agreeable to yourself, to submit your name to the Queen for the distinction of a baronetcy, so that, by an hereditary honour, there may always be a living memorial of the appreciation of your genius by your countrymen. Have the kindness to inform me of your feelings on this subject; I shall remain here to the 4th of January. After that it will be best to direct to me at 10 Downing Street, Whitehall.

I have the honour to remain, dear Mr. Tennyson,  
Faithfully yours, B. DISRAELI.

My father answered Mr. Disraeli that Mr. Gladstone had offered a baronetcy before, and that he would prefer to adhere to the decision to which he had then come: that he respectfully

declined the honour himself but wished it might be conferred if possible after his death on his son. Mr. Disraeli replied that such a course as reserving a baronetcy for a son was contrary to all precedent. My father then wrote as follows:

ALDWORTH, BLACKDOWN,  
HASLEMERE.

DEAR MR. DISRAELI,

It is quite certain that I never desired anything contrary to precedent; nor did Mr. Gladstone pledge himself to anything contrary, as (for I have been looking over his letters) he expressly stated. I am therefore fully aware that his promise on the subject was to be interpreted according to precedent, with whatever reserves this may imply. Be the issue what it may, my son is happy in the knowledge of the Queen's gracious intention to his father, and of Mr. Gladstone's kindness, and your own.

I have the honour to be yours faithfully,

A. TENNYSON.

At the end of this year my father received a letter from a bricklayer in America, the son of an old Somersby bricklayer, which delighted him, and which obtained a line or two of cordial thanks.

TRENTON, MISSOURI, 1874.

MR. TENNYSON,

Sir, I don't know whether this will gain me a response; I know it ought. I have long wished I

could get a line from you, since your poetry is in almost every house considered respectable, and your name a household word even out here in the far west. I will relate one anecdote in proof. A good little sewing girl had gained my esteem. I wished to make her a present, and she said, "If I had Tennyson's poems!"

I am H. H. Atkinson, son of Thomas Atkinson, bricklayer, Hagg, near Somersby, and am a bricklayer myself. You will scarcely remember my father building the Doctor's dining-room, you were very young then, about my age. My reminiscences of the Tennyson family run away back. My mother was a Tealby woman, and was in her young days dressmaker for the old Squire's lady, and my father thought so much of the Doctor who was always the Doctor par excellence. The public papers here describe you as a stout broad-shouldered man, and I remember the Doctor so well that if you resemble him I think I should know you. Ah me! it only seems like yesterday, when the Doctor came down to scold the old coachman for ordering my father to build the new carriage-house on too large a plan (coachee would say to the Doctor what no one else dare), said he, "By G—d, sir, you have a twopenny coachman, I have a twopenny master." I can just now see the good Doctor smile, and walk away, and the coach-house was built. I can just now see the apple-trees that bore such fine yellow apples running up from the stables to the house, the broad lawn where some boys, whom I wot of, used to astonish me by coming out with those wondrous gauze helmets and long foils, and I was afraid mischief would be done. You were not very broad-shouldered then I remember. Do you remember the Siberian crab-tree down the garden, the old Scotch firs at the house-end where the rooks used to build, and those tiny bantams that made their home

over the oven, and the handsome cock who was burned to death? I remember one Good Friday we were working for the Doctor. I see him coming, and hear him saying, "Atkinson, you must leave work and go to church," and I remember he preached from "As Moses lifted up the serpent," the first time I had ever heard it as a text and that is near fifty years ago. Ah sir! perhaps no man in America knows as well as I where you first heard the wrens twitter, the blackbirds, thrushes, the robins sing. Many a speckled trout and silver eel have I caught in the brook, running through the meadow below.

And now I am here about fifteen hundred miles west of New York, asking for an autograph all the way from the Isle of Wight.

If you can spare me a line, I would like to know how many children you have, also if Mr. Fred is living, Mr. Charles (Turner now), also Miss Emily whom everybody loved, also Mr. Arthur.

I was burnt out in Chicago, and have lost a fine boy since then from consumption, my only boy. I live in a house and garden of my own here between two groves; we can grow fine peaches here, also all kinds of melons, etc. etc. without extra care. Have I tired you? Well, my heart grows soft and young again in looking over the long past, tho' I have sail'd the seas over, I've crossed the wide ocean.

If this goes into your waste basket, please excuse the scrawl and

Believe me, sir, yours truly, H. H. ATKINSON.

At this time my father often felt oppressed by the compliments and curiosity of undiscerning critics, and would say: "I hate the blare and



blaze of so-called fame. What business has the public to want to know all about Byron's wildnesses? He has given them fine work, and they ought to be satisfied. It is all for the sake of babble. As for the excuse, 'Tôt ou tard tout se sait,' nothing can be falser as far as this world is concerned. The surface of the *tout* may be, but the *tout* never is, correctly known. 'If one knew all, one would pardon all,' is much more likely to be the truth. The worth of a biography depends on whether it is done by one who wholly loves the man whose life he writes, yet loves him with a discriminating love. Few of these gossiping biographies are the man, more often the writer." He wrote out these lines then.

*Fame. (Unpublished)*

Well, as to Fame, who strides the earth  
 With that long horn she loves to blow,  
 I know a little of her worth,  
 And I will tell you what I know—  
 This London once was middle sea,  
 These hills were plains within the past,  
 They will be plains again, and we,  
 Poor devils, babble "we shall last."

## CHAPTER VII

### METAPHYSICAL SOCIETY

Our true co-mates regather round the mast—

\* \* \* \* \*

For some, descending from the sacred peak  
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again  
Their lot with ours to rove the world about ;  
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek  
If any golden harbour be for men  
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt.

---

My faith is large in Time  
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

THE Metaphysical Society was founded, in 1869, by my father, Mr. Pritchard, and Mr. Knowles, the idea being first mooted by Mr. Knowles. The latter writes to me : “The Metaphysical Society owed its existence to your father, for it was entirely through his adhesion to the plan for it that this remarkable club was set on foot. At first it was intended that no distinct and avowed opponents of Christianity should be invited, though Anglicans of all shades, Roman Catholics, Unitarians, and Nonconformists should be eligible. But it was soon felt that if any real

discussion of Christian evidences was to take place, the opposition ought to be fully and fairly represented. This extension of the plan commended itself especially to Dean Stanley, whom I consulted early about it, and it was when talking over it at the Deanery one day, with him and Lady Augusta, that she suggested the name of 'Metaphysical Society' as being better than 'Theological Society' in the altered circumstances of its composition." The object of the Society therefore was, that those who were ranged on the side of faith should meet those who were ranged on the side of unfaith, and freely interchange their views. Darwin's theory of evolution was prominent in men's minds, and my father for one thought that, although evolution in a modified form was partially true, some of Darwin's disciples had drawn unwarrantable inferences from the theory, and had arrogated to themselves too much. His friends and himself were grieved at the scorn that the theological and the agnostic parties showed toward each other, and considered that meeting on a friendly footing would do much toward the ventilation of new doctrines, and the clearing up of misunderstandings, as well as toward the cultivation of charity in controversy, and mutual esteem.<sup>1</sup>

I give the earliest members of the Society in order of the names signed in the minute-book :

<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of his life he rejoiced that the churches were standing shoulder to shoulder in works of charity and education.

Dean Stanley, Seeley, Roden Noel, James Martineau, W. B. Carpenter, Hinton, Huxley, Pritchard, Hutton, Ward, Bagehot, Froude, Tennyson, Tyndall, Alfred Barry, Lord Arthur Russell, Gladstone, Manning, Knowles, Lubbock, Alford, Alexander Grant, Bishop of St. David's, Frederic Harrison, Father Dalgairns, G. Grove, Shadworth Hodgson, Henry Sidgwick, Edmund Lushington, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, Mark Pattison.<sup>1</sup>

The subjects originally suggested for discussion were the comparison of the different theories respecting the ultimate grounds of belief in the objective and moral sciences, the logic of the sciences whether physical or social, the immortality of the soul and its personal identity, the personality of God, conscience—its true character, the material hypothesis.

At one of the preliminary meetings, my father said humorously that "Modern science ought at all events to have taught men to separate light from heat," and this was certainly adopted as the rule of the Society.

<sup>1</sup> The following were afterwards elected : (1870) The Duke of Argyll, Ruskin, Robert Lowe, Grant Duff. (1871) W. R. Greg, A. C. Fraser, Henry Acland, F. D. Maurice, The Archbishop of York, J. B. Mozley. (1872) The Dean of St. Paul's, The Bishop of Peterborough, J. Croom Robertson. (1873) FitzJames Stephen, Sylvester, J. C. Bucknill. (1874) Dr. Andrew Clark, W. K. Clifford, St. George Mivart, Matthew Boulton. (1876) Lord Selborne, John Morley. (1877) Leslie Stephen. (1879) Frederick Pollock, Gasquet, C. B. Upton, William Gull, Robert Clarke. (1880) A. J. Balfour, James Sully, A. Barratt.

The first meeting after the formation of the Society took place at the Deanery, Westminster, June 2nd, 1869, under the presidency of Sir John Lubbock, when my father's poem "The Higher Pantheism" was read. With the poem he sent this note to the secretary. "I am not coming up for your meeting, *i.e.* I believe so, to-day, and your request that you may read the poem at that meeting abashes me. If you are to read it, it ought to be stated surely that I have but ceded to your strongly expressed desire. Hutton can have a copy of it if he choose; but an I had known that such as he wanted it, I would have looked at it again before I let it go." Mr. Ward was elected President of the Society in 1870, and my father was always struck with his reckless candour, his liberality, and his "swift dimicatory" ways; and would observe, when Ward was depressed, "If I had Ward's blind faith, I should always be happy." The finest argumentative duels that he had heard, he said, and those which impressed him most, were between Huxley and Martineau. F. D. Maurice he thought was probably "the greatest mind of them all," although often his thoughts were too deep to be easily understood. Grant Duff writes to Mr. Wilfrid Ward of one of these meetings, "I do not remember that the Laureate took any part in the discussion, but his mere presence added dignity to a dignified assemblage."

Father Haythornethwaite, W. G. Ward's chaplain, reminds me of one of Ward's stories about my father and Cardinal Manning, which I give in Father Haythornethwaite's words.

“‘Why did you show such deference to Manning?’ reprovngly asked an agnostic friend of Tennyson, who had seen him and the Cardinal talking together at a ‘Metaphysical’ meeting, when Tennyson had apparently been as deferential as Johnson on his introduction to the Archbishop of York. ‘Because Manning,’ Tennyson had replied, ‘is the distinguished head of a great Church.’ He had a profound respect for sincere religion in every shape, and though it cannot be said that he pinned his faith to formulæ, all Christian Creeds had his sincere good-will and sympathy, and it was his constantly repeated wish that they ‘should sink their differences and pull together for the bettering of mankind.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Father Haythornethwaite's note on this is interesting, but has nothing to do with the Metaphysical Society. “Tennyson liked to tell the story of the French priest he had met abroad, with whom he had conversed in dog-Latin: ‘If our Cardinals,’ said the priest, ‘were not so proud, and your Bishops not so obstinate, there might be some chance of the Union of the Churches.’ Tennyson clearly saw the need of Churches and sympathised with all forms of religious belief,

‘Thou knowest I hold that forms are needful’ (‘Akbar’),

and he looked forward, not always unhopefully, to the day when there would be one Shepherd and one Flock. He wished that the Church of England could embrace, as he felt that Christ would have it do, all the great Nonconformist sects that loved the name

From the discussions of the Metaphysical Society he came out as strongly convinced as ever of the irrationality of pure materialism, while respecting the earnestness and lofty aims of many among them. Agnostics and theists he felt were more akin than they thought, in that they all recognized a Power behind Law. He was glad to receive the impression that theologians of this age were more enlightened than their predecessors, and that there was an endeavour in the Churches to march side by side with science, and bring their teaching into living relation with the movement of contemporary thought.

As for pure metaphysics I have heard him say: "I do not think that we have advanced much beyond the old philosophers."

The last meeting of the Society was held at Dr. Martineau's house on May 16th, 1880. Huxley asserted that it "died of too much love"; my father declared that it "perished because after ten years of strenuous effort no one had succeeded in even defining the term 'Metaphysics.'"

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of Christ. He recognised to the full that an organized religion was the needful guardian of morality. He was indignant at the expulsion of the Religious Orders from France, calling Paul Bert roundly 'a beast,' and angrily asking, 'What is left for poor people if you take away their religion?' He was full of compunction at once having shown a poor man what he thought an inconsistency in the Gospel, lest he should have weakened his faith in the Bible. He would repeat chant-like in his rich voice the hymns of the Roman breviary: his delicate ear particularly revelling in the sonorous roll of the 'Ave Regina Cœlorum.'"

Subjoined is an account of my father's metaphysical views as understood by Dr. Martineau.

35 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.  
1893.

MY DEAR LORD TENNYSON,

As the Metaphysical Society arose from your noble father's suggestion, and he was its first President, it is natural to seek in its history for some characteristic traces of his genius and influence; and they would have been found there in abundance, had he assumed the control over its proceedings which he was too willing to leave in other hands. But in such a society the deeper thinkers, especially if they be rare attendants, seldom come to the front; being outstripped by ready talkers who are always there, and who move upon an intellectual plane level to the eye of all. By reference to the secretary's Minute Book I find that out of 100 Meetings between April 21st, 1869, and your father's resignation December 9th, 1879, he was with us only eleven times; usually as a silent listener, exceptionally interposing some short question or pregnant hint. On June 2nd, 1869, being unable to join us, he sent his poem on "The Higher Pantheism" to be read to us by Mr. Knowles. Nothing that he ever wrote was more likely to lead to interesting discussion: but the evening was pre-engaged to a paper of Mr. R. H. Hutton's on Herbert Spencer's theory of the Genesis of apparent Moral Intuitions; so that the admiration of that memorable poem remained untouched by a word of criticism.

I seem to remember a special interest shown by your father in a paper contributed by the Rev. F. D. Maurice on the meaning of the words "Nature," "Natural,"



"Supernatural," November 21st, 1871, the only time that Maurice was ever present (he died April 1st, 1872). The Coleridgian acceptation of these words was not less congenial to the Poet than to the Divine, harmonising and consecrating for both the uniformity of the material and the freedom of the spiritual world. I have the impression that in this fellowship of thoughts with the truest *Vates* of his age, Mr. Maurice found a powerful inward support.

The other subjects on which papers were read in your father's presence were the following :

*July 14, 1869. The commonsense philosophy of Causation: Dr. W. B. Carpenter.*

*June 15, 1870. Is there any Axiom of Causation? Myself. (Mr. Tennyson in the chair.)*

*July 13. The relativity of Knowledge: Mr. Fred. Harrison.*

*Dec. 13. The emotion of Conviction: Mr. Walter Bagehot.*

*July 11, 1871. What is Death? Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.*

*July 9, 1872. The supposed necessity for seeking a solution of ultimate Metaphysical Problems: Mr. F. Harrison.*

*Nov. 12. The five idols of the Theatre: Mr. Shadworth H. Hodgson.*

*Dec. 16, 1873. Utilitarianism: Professor Henry Sidgwick.*

*Feb. 12, 1878. Double truth: Rev. M. Pattison, Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford.*

I cannot recall anything that fell from your father in the discussion of these topics. But in general his sympathies went with the advocate of the more con-

servative aspects of moral and metaphysical questions, as presented by such Roman Catholic members as Cardinal Manning, Dr. W. G. Ward, Father Dalgairns ; and such independent writers as Dean Stanley, Prof. H. Sidgwick, Mr. R. H. Hutton and the Duke of Argyll.

That in a certain sense our great Laureate's poetry has nevertheless had a dissolving<sup>1</sup> influence upon the over-definite dogmatic creeds within hearing or upon the modes of religious thought amid which it was born, can hardly be doubted. In laying bare, as it does, the history of his own spirit, its conflicts and aspirations, its alternate eclipse of doubt and glow of faith, it has reported more than a personal experience : he has told the story of an age which he has thus brought into Self-knowledge. And as he has never for himself surrendered the traditional form of a devout faith, till he has seized its permanent spirit, and invested it with a purer glory, so has he saved it for others by making it fairer than they had dreamt. Among thousands of readers previously irresponsive to anything Divine he has created, or immeasurably intensified, the susceptibility of religious reverence.

I was aware that my last book did not meet with your father's approval. I need not say what support I should have found in his sympathy. The message, however, which he sent me, that his objection had reference not to the book itself but to the act of *publishing* it, somewhat consoled me ; by showing that we differed less about the *quest* of truth than about its *presentation* ; his tenderness towards others' beliefs leading him to favour an *esoteric* teaching distinct from

<sup>1</sup> What I mean by "dissolving" is not *destroying* religious faith, but *releasing* it from imprisonment within tight propositions which *define the Infinite*.

the exoteric. So long as for certain subjects Latin remained the literary language of Europe it was easy to address a selected audience by writing *ad clericos* in Latin, *ad populum* in the *vernacular* tongue. But now that every book must be accessible to every reader, the choice lies between total suppression or free utterance of conviction. I cannot see that we are entrusted with any right of suppression when once profoundly convinced of a truth not yet within others' reach.<sup>1</sup>

Yes, I know and glory in every line of "Akbar," except that I cannot, like Akbar, trust the "hand that rules" to "mould" or choose the "forms" of faith and worship that suit the needs of all the people.

Ever yours most truly, JAMES MARTINEAU.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Martineau's last book seemed to my father to be "founded on doubts rather than on profound convictions."—T.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HISTORICAL PLAYS

#### “QUEEN MARY” (*published 1875*)

“QUEEN MARY,” the first play of what my father called his “historical trilogy” (“Harold,” “Becket” and “Queen Mary”), was published in 1875. “This trilogy of plays,” he notes, “pourtrays the making of England.” In “Harold” we have the great conflict between Danes, Saxons and Normans for supremacy, the awakening of the English people and clergy from the slumber into which they had for the most part fallen, and the forecast of the greatness of our composite race.

In “Becket” the struggle is between the Crown and the Church for predominance, a struggle which continued for many centuries.

In “Mary” are described the final downfall of Roman Catholicism in England, and the dawning of a new age: for after the era of priestly domination comes the era of the freedom of the individual.

“In ‘The Foresters,’” my father wrote, “I have sketched the state of the people in another great transition period of the making of England, when the barons sided with the people and eventually won for them the Magna Charta.”

To begin publishing plays for the stage after he was sixty-five years of age, was thought to be a hazardous experiment. He had, however, always taken the liveliest interest in the theatre ; and he bestowed infinite trouble on his dramas, choosing these three great periods of ‘Harold,’ ‘Becket,’ and ‘Mary,’ so as to complete the line of Shakespeare’s English chronicle-plays, which end with the commencement of the Reformation. He was quite alive to the fact that for him to attempt this dramatic work would be at first unpopular, since he was then mainly regarded as an Idyllic, or as a lyric, poet. But Spedding, a first-rate Shakespearian scholar, George H. Lewes and George Eliot admired his plays, and encouraged him to persevere in spite of all discouragement. He felt that he had the power ; and even at the age of fourteen he had written plays which were “extraordinary for a boy,” and full of vivid contrasts and striking scenic effects. All his life he enjoyed discovering the causes of historical and social movements ; and had a strong desire to reverse unfair judgments, and an eager delight in the analysis of human motive and character. With the great dramas of ancient and modern times he was acquainted ;

hating in consequence the hideous realism and unreality of plays like "La Tosca"; but he believed in the future of our modern English stage when education should have made the masses more literary. "Clever enough but wants nature" was his criticism of much of the dramatic work in the present day. He regarded the drama as one of the most humanising of influences. He always hoped that the State, or the municipalities, as well as the public schools, would produce our great English historical plays, so that they might form part of the Englishman's ordinary educational curriculum. For himself he was aware that he wanted intimate knowledge of the mechanical details necessary for the modern stage; although in early and middle life he had been a constant playgoer, and would keenly follow the action of a play, criticizing the characterization, incidents, scenic effects, situations, language and dramatic points. His dramas were written with the intention that actors should edit them for the stage,<sup>1</sup> keeping them at the high poetic level; yet he did not always approve when they omitted those soliloquies and necessary episodes which reveal the

<sup>1</sup> Mary Anderson writes to me: "In reading 'The Cup' and 'The Foresters' Lord Tennyson showed by his remarks that he had the instincts of the true dramatist; and he moreover asked me to tell him of any lines that might seem to me to overweight the dramatic action of these plays. He thoroughly appreciated the need of action, and was ready to sacrifice even his *most* beautiful lines for the sake of a real dramatic effect."

character and, so to say, the mental action of a piece ; nor did he speak favourably of some of the modern sensational *curtains*. He said that “The public are often left poised on the top of a wave, and the wave is not allowed to break” ; that this might be modern theatrical art, but is entirely opposed to the canons of true literary dramatic art : and that the theatric and the dramatic were always being mistaken the one for the other.<sup>1</sup>

He would observe that “Critics are so exacting now-a-days, that they not only expect a poet-playwright to be a first-rate author but a first-rate manager, actor and audience all in one.” He said they did not consider that the conditions of dramatic art are much more complex than they were, and that to be a first-rate historical playwright means much more work than formerly, seeing that “exact history” has taken the place of the chance chronicle, and that a dramatist is expected to be cognisant of all the newest phases of contemporary drama.

As his “Queen Mary,” “Cup,” “Becket,” “Falcon” and “Foresters” were all more or less successful on the stage, partly no doubt owing to the admirable stage-management, I cannot but feel sorry that he did not add to his plays another which he had in his mind, “Simon de Montfort,” wherein he would have portrayed some of his favourite historical characters,

<sup>1</sup> The same complaint was made by Fanny Kemble.

de Montfort, and the greatest of the Plantagenets, Edward, and Roger Bacon. The England of the thirteenth century, its great architecture, its Common Law, its new-made constitution (the archetype of all modern free constitutions), its literature, its Universities for rich and poor, moved him only less than "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." Both "The Cup" and "Becket" hold the stage, but whether these or his other plays will continue to do so is of course a question which only time can answer.

During 1874 and 1875 my father worked hard and unceasingly at his "Queen Mary," "more of a chronicle-play" he called it. The first list of books which he read on the subject is written down in his note-book: "Collier's *Ecclesiastical History*, Fuller's *Church History*, Burnet's *Reformation*, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, Hayward's *Edward*, Cave's *P. X. Y.*, Hooker, Neale's *History of the Puritans*, Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, Strype's *Cranmer*, Strype's *Parker*, Philips' *Pole*, *Primitive Fathers No Papists*, Lingard's *History of England*, *Church Historians of England*, *Zürich Letters*, and *Original Letters and Correspondence of Archbishop Parker* (published by the Parker Society)," in addition to Froude, Holinshed and Camden.

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With respect to character-painting my father considered "Queen Mary" the most successful



of his plays, but with his keen sense of truth always regretted that he had not, through lack of knowledge, done justice, as he thought, to Sir Thomas White, Lord Mayor of London. The following remarks by Hutton seemed to him to bring out his own conceptions of the characters :

Almost all the characters who play a real part in the drama, however slightly touched, are clearly defined ; Philip, whose disgust for the Queen is powerfully painted, but who remains otherwise something of a cold, cruel and sensual shadow, being perhaps in some degree an exception. Courtenay, Earl of Devon, the vain and flighty Catholic Plantagenet, “this prince of fluff and feather,” as Lord Howard in speaking to Elizabeth calls him ; Reginald Pole, the fair-weather Papal Legate, who shrinks alike from being persecuted and from persecuting, but is easily driven into the latter policy under fear of the former ; Bishop Gardiner with his fierce Romanising dogmatism and his English hatred of Italian interference in English concerns,

His big baldness,  
That irritable forelock which he rubs,  
His buzzard beak, and deep incavern'd eyes.

Bonner and his moral brutality, Lord Paget with the half-confessed Protestantism of his statesman's intellect, and yet that craving for English influence abroad which makes him support the alliance with Spain ; Lord Howard, with his aristocratic Catholicism, his complete contempt for the vulgarity and ignorance of the new schismatics, and yet his thoroughly rooted antipathy

to the bigotry of the sacerdotal spirit ; Sir Thomas Wyatt, with his tasteful literary cravings, and the keen audacious soldier beneath them ; Sir Ralph Bagenhall, with his bold, meditative insubordination and his hopelessness of active resistance ; Sir Thomas White (the Lord Mayor), with his political indecision, and his wonderful dexterity at swaying the London Guilds directly the feather's weight has turned the scale which he is pleased to call his mind, so as to decide him on his own course ; Cranmer with his somewhat questionable faith and courage, questionable we mean as regards historical fact, not questionable at all in Mr. Tennyson's picture, his humility, penitence and sweetness ; and lastly, the imaginary servants and peasants, both men and women, who are made parties to the drama,—these are all drawn with a firm hand and painted with a delicate touch. But the great characters of the piece are, as of course they ought to be, Mary and her half-sister Elizabeth, whose star declines as the Catholic Queen's rises, and rises fair again as Mary's sets. Of course the portrait of Elizabeth is comparatively slight as compared with that of Mary, but though much less carefully filled in it is to the full as dramatic and life-like.

In few ages of the Christian era can the words "I came not to send peace but a sword" have been more sorrowfully verified than in the life of Mary Tudor. The wrong, done by her father to her mother and herself, was a sword that early pierced through Mary's own soul. She had, my father thought, been harshly judged by the popular verdict of tradition, therefore he had a desire to let her be seen as he pictured her in his imagination. Hence he was attracted

toward the subject. He pitied the poor girl, who not only was cast down by her father from her high estate, but treated with shameless contumely by the familiar friends of her childhood. What wonder that a nature originally bright should thus have been clouded ! He sympathised with her queenly courage, dramatically expressed by him, when, after her accession, triumphant over revolt, she flashes out with :

My foes are at my feet and Philip King.

He held that all allowance ought to be made for her, when, her high hopes for the Church and for the kingdom having been rekindled and quenched, the clouds of youth gathered again into a settled gloom. Throughout all history, he said, there was nothing more mournful than the final tragedy of this woman, who, with her deep longing for love, found herself hated by her people, abandoned by her husband : and harassed in the hour of death by the restlessness of despair.<sup>1</sup>

The real difficulty of the drama, as my father

<sup>1</sup> The well-known critic Mons. Augustin Filon writes in *Le Théâtre Contemporain* (1895): “Vienne une main pieuse qui dégage ces deux drames (“Queen Mary” and “Harold”), fasse circuler l’air et la lumière autour de leurs lignes essentielles ; vienne un grand acteur qui compresse et incarne Harold, une grande actrice qui se passionne pour le caractère de Marie, et, sans effort, Tennyson prendra sa place parmi les dramaturges.”

The plays also seem to have appealed to no less an authority than Mons. Jules Claretie who has described them as “beaux drames, et nobles inventions théâtrales.”

was aware, is to give sufficient relief to its intense sadness, especially to the scenes in which Mary's devotion is repelled by Philip's coldness, consummated in that last scene, where she sits upon the ground, rocking herself to and fro, making her lament.

Nothing less than the holy calm of the meek and penitent Cranmer can be adequate artistic relief.<sup>1</sup>

He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd upright ;  
His eye was like a soldier's, whom the general  
He looks to and he leans on as his God  
Hath rated for some backwardness and bidd'n  
him

Charge one against a thousand, and the man  
Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes and dies.

The following close of the last act, which my father wrote in 1876 for the acting edition,<sup>2</sup> he never printed, but left as a note :

After Mary's speech, ending "Help me hence."

*[She falls into the arms of Lady Clarence.]*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the remarkable review in the *Times*, June 19th, 1875.

<sup>2</sup> As produced at the Lyceum Theatre with Irving as Philip, and Miss Kate Bateman as Queen Mary. Miss Bateman played some of her part finely, and Irving's "Philip" my father always pronounced to be a consummate performance, ranking it for powerful conception of character with Salvini's "Othello."

On the Australian stage Miss Dargon won a triumph in "Queen Mary." It was very popular when produced at the Melbourne Theatre-Royal, and had a long run ; and when reproduced at the Bijou Theatre in the same city had a second long run.

*Alice.* The hand of God hath help'd her hence.

*Lady Clarence.*

Not yet.

[*To Elizabeth as she enters.*

Speak, speak, a word of yours may wake her.

*Elizabeth (kneeling at her sister's knee).* Mary !

*Mary.* Mary ! who calls ? 'tis long since any one

Has called me Mary. She,

There in the dark she sits and calls for me,

She that should wear her state before the world.

My father's own true wife. Aye, madam.

Hark !

For she will call again.

*Elizabeth.*

Mary, my sister !

*Mary.*

That's not the voice !

Who is it steps between me and the light ?

[*Puts her arm round Elizabeth's neck.*

I held her in my arms a guileless babe,

And mourn'd her orphan doom along with mine.

The crown ! she comes for that ! take it and feel it !

It stings the touch ! It is not gold but thorns !

[*Mary starts up.*

The crown of crowns ! Play not with holy things !

[*Clasps her hands and kneels.*

Keep you the faith ! . . . yea, Mother, yea, I come !

[*Dies.*

*Lady Clarence.* She is dead.

*Elizabeth (kneeling by the body).* Poor sister !  
Peace be with the dead. [Curtain.

*Letters about "Queen Mary"*

*From J. A. Froude*

5 ONSLOW GARDENS,  
May 7th, 1875.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I cannot trust myself to say how greatly I admire the play. Beyond the immediate effect, you'll have hit a more fatal blow than a thousand pamphleteers and controversialists ; besides this you have reclaimed one more section of English History from the wilderness and given it a form in which it will be fixed for ever. No one since Shakespeare has done that. When we were beginning to think that we were to have no more from you, you have given us the greatest of all your works. Once more I thank you for having written this book with all my heart.

Most truly yours, J. A. FROUDE.

*From Robert Browning*

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, W.,  
June 30th, 1875.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

Thank you very much for "Queen Mary," the gift, and even more for "Queen Mary," the poem : it is astonishingly fine. Conception, execution, the

whole and the parts, I see nowhere the shade of a fault, thank you once again! I am going to begin it afresh now. What a joy it is that such a poem should be, and be yours!

All affectionate regards to Mrs. Tennyson from  
Yours ever, ROBERT BROWNING.

Count Münster wrote about Prince Bismarck:

He now has real holidays at Varzin and has for a short time given up all public business, and told me that he has already read parts of “Queen Mary” with the greatest pleasure and admiration.

*From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone*

11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,  
*June 30th, 1875.*

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

It was most kind in you to send me the book; and I wish I had or could have anything to cap it with that would not seem like a mocking echo.

However I am going to reprint in a volume my recent tracts and I shall perhaps make bold to send them to you.

Perhaps we may appear in the “Index” together.

I cannot but be glad that, in turning to historic times, you have struck a stroke for the nation. For my own personal share, I have found my interest in your work on this occasion enhanced and cumulated by the novelty of form and by having to enjoy a careful historic study. It must have cost you great pains to qualify for such an assemblage of portraits: of whom

five or six at least are of personages whose names never can be effaced from our annals, nor do I know that Mary, Philip (in England), Gardiner or Cranmer have ever yet been fully drawn. The two last are still in a considerable degree mysteries to me! Was Cranmer a great weak man? Do great and weak contradict and include one another? He was certainly weak, I think, in the everlasting fluctuation of his opinions; for surely fluctuation of opinion had much to do with the six recantations. Elizabeth on the other hand was to my mind one of the great theologians of the period (who were exceedingly few) as well as the greatest among women-rulers. I think you may not dislike the following sentence from Jeremy Collier on Cranmer at the stake: "He seemed to repel the force of flames, and to overlook the torture by strength of thought."

My judgment is worthless, but I heartily congratulate you on the Poem, on the Study, and on the grace and ease with which you move in new habiliments.

Ever sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

*From Edward FitzGerald*

WOODBIDGE, *July 9th*, 1875.

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,

I had bought your Play a few days before your gift-copy reached me. I have not had sufficient time to digest either you see, though I have read through twice. I must leave it for the Papers and Magazines to judge in a few hours, what took you, I suppose, weeks and months in concocting. I could speak of parts, I think: but not yet of the whole: and you can very well afford (can't you?) to wait till "The



Great Twalmley” pronounces? One thing, I don’t quite understand why you have so much relinquished “*thee*” and “*thou*” with their relative verbs for “*you*,” etc. I know that we have had more than enough of “Thee” and “Thou” in modern Plays and Poems; but it should surely rule in the common *talk* of Mary’s time. I suppose however that you have some very good reason for so often supplying the old form by the new.

Still your old Fitzcrotchet, you see, still! And so will be to the end, I suppose. I am not over-well just now, and see very little of books; all day on the river, and talking to the ducks and barndoor.

But ever yours the same,  
“OLD FITZ.”

*From Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Bart.*

OXBURGH, STOKE FERRY,  
20th August, 1875.

SIR,

As a great admirer of your genius, I eagerly read your drama “Queen Mary,” but was so surprised and pained at the ignoble part which is allotted to Sir Henry Bedingfield, that I cannot refrain from addressing you on the subject. I feel justified in so doing, as I am the direct descendant of Sir Henry, and date from the house which was his home. The millions who will read “Mary Tudor,” or witness the play on the stage, will carry away the impression that my ancestor was a vulgar yeoman in some way connected with the stables, whereas he was a man of ancient lineage, a trusted friend and servant of the Queen, who confided to him in time of danger the Lieutenancy of the Tower, and

the custody of the Princess Elizabeth. This Princess so respected Sir Henry that, although she complained of his severity during her captivity, she visited him at Oxburgh after her accession to the Throne, and treated him with the greatest consideration. Numerous documents in my possession, including letters from the Sovereign, from the Privy Council, and from the most eminent men of the time, would prove, were such proof required, the high position held by Sir Henry. I trust therefore to your feeling of justice, that you will, if possible, either strike out Sir Henry's name from future editions, or allot to him a more dignified part on the stage, and one which will convey a more correct view of his character and position.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY BEDINGFELD.

*Answer to Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Bart.*

FARRINGFORD, April 15th, 1876.

SIR,

Your letter arrived when I was abroad, else would have been answered at once: and therefore I waited till the play should be announced for acting. I had made your ancestor an honest gentleman tho' a rough one, as I found him reported to be, whether that were true or no; and I regret that you should have been pain'd by my representation of him. Now, in deference to your wishes, his name is not once mention'd on the stage, and he is call'd in the play-bill merely "Governor of Woodstock."

Moreover I have inserted a line in Elizabeth's part, “Out, girl, you wrong a noble gentleman.”<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. TENNYSON.

It may be as well to insert here a letter from Robert Browning, written in April 1876, describing the production of “Queen Mary” on the stage. My father said that in his opinion Philip and Richard III. were Irving's best parts.

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, W.

*April 19th, 1876.*

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I want to be among the earliest who assure you of the complete success of your “Queen Mary” last night.<sup>2</sup> I have more than once seen a more satisfactory performance of it, to be sure, in what Carlyle calls “the Private Theatre under my own hat,” because there and then not a line nor a word was left out; nay, there were abundant “encores” of half the speeches: still whatever was left by the stage scissors suggested what a quantity of “cuttings” would furnish one with an after-feast.

Irving was very good indeed, and the others did their best, nor so badly.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry expressed himself satisfied with the explanation and the added line.—T.

<sup>2</sup> One of the lines most applauded was:

“I am English Queen, not Roman Emperor”;

which hit the temper of the London democracy, for the Queen had lately assumed the title of Empress of India.

The love as well as admiration for the author was conspicuous, indeed, I don't know whether you ought to have been present to enjoy it, or were not safer in absence from a smothering of flowers and deafening "tumult of acclaim," but Hallam was there to report, and Mrs. Tennyson is with you to believe. All congratulations to you both from

Yours affectionately ever,  
ROBERT BROWNING.

## “ HAROLD ”

(*Published* 1876)

“Harold” my father called his “Tragedy of Doom,” citing the scenes of the comet, Harold’s shipwreck and capture, the oath, Edward’s curse and death, the marriage and coronation of Harold and Aldwyth, and the great battle of Senlac.

Winds and waves, Harold’s own acts, so alien to his nature, and even circumstances fight against him and yet he still holds to duty, nobleness and patriotism. The truthful Harold’s false oath by the saints of Normandy gives the tragic unity to the action.

It becomes his avenging destiny. In his short career, it is what the inherited curse was to the house of Pelops. Harold can say in the true sense which Euripides meant, “My tongue has sworn, but my soul has not sworn.” Nothing in the play seems to us finer than the contrast between Harold’s own view of his predicament and the casuistry of the theologians who seek to re-assure him. He has a foreboding that he must suffer the immediate doom of the defiled; but

beyond that doom he looks up to that Justice which shall give him the reward of the pure in spirit.<sup>1</sup>

In vain Harold defeats the Danes and his own treasonable brother Tostig who has brought them into England. The bloody victory does but weaken him in the struggle for supremacy with William.

In vain does he sacrifice his Edith and marry Aldwyth to secure, as he thinks, the aid of her brothers Edwin and Morcar. They stand aloof in his hour of need ; and his own high courage itself does but expose him to the fatal arrow which seals his doom and that of England.

When we were at Battle Abbey in 1876, where my father wrote his prefatory sonnet to "Harold," we found a rising ground to the English right, and he pictured Edith and Stigand and the English canons of Waltham and the

<sup>1</sup> From the review in the *Times*, Oct. 18th, 1876, by Professor Jebb. When my father was writing the notes to his poems, such as are often quoted throughout these chapters, he read this review, and thought that it contained most of what he had to say about "Harold" as a subject for drama. Harold's character he considered very ably drawn : "No historical character unites more completely than Harold all the elements of dramatic effect. His military genius, his civil virtues, his loyal and fearless championship of England against the dominion of strangers ; his liberality, which has for its perpetual monument his secular foundation of Waltham ; his frank and open bearing, in which prudent contemporaries blamed too slight a regard for self-interest ; his generous courage, which panegyrists could not wholly vindicate from the charge of rashness ; his tall stature, his comely countenance, that mighty physical strength to which the pictures of the Bayeux tapestry bear witness—all these things make Harold a man fit to stand as the central figure of a drama."

camp followers standing to watch the battle, and to catch a glimpse of their great Harold between the English standards which flapped high above the roof of flying arrows, and the deadly gleam of axes “ that lightened with a single flash about the summit.” And when we saw the streams of tourists flowing over the lawns, and not seeming much to care for this mighty Harold or for the momentous field of Senlac, he turned to me and said

“ Another England now we come and go,  
A nation’s fall has grown a summer show.”

But those tragic days of the “ nation’s fall ” were the prelude of a new birth for England, as Edward foresaw in his death-vision,—one of those passages in which my father thought he had been successful :

Then a great Angel past along the highest  
Crying “ the doom of England,” and at once  
He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword  
Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree  
From off the bearing trunk, and hurl’d it from him  
Three fields away, and then he dash’d and  
drench’d,

He dyed, he soak’d the trunk with human blood,  
And brought the sunder’d tree again, and set it  
Straight on the trunk, that thus baptized in  
blood

Grew ever high and higher, beyond my seeing,

And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep  
 That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles  
 Beyond my seeing : and the great Angel rose  
 And past again along the highest crying  
 “ The doom of England ! ”

To meet the conditions of the modern drama, before writing “ Harold ” my father had studied many recent plays. He had also refreshed his mind with the dramas of Æschylus and Sophocles, which always seemed to him “ full of noble reality and moral beauty.”

It has been asked why in his historical trilogy he does not give free rein to his sense of humour ; the answer is, he held that a certain formal humour was the only humour possible now-a-days in stage-tragedy, which in its rapid action does not allow scope for original humour ; and that even this formal humour must be kept in strict subservience to the plot.

*Letters about “ Harold ”*

*From Henry W. Longfellow*

CAMBRIDGE, Dec. 21st, 1876.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I have just been reading your “ Harold ” and am delighted with its freshness, strength and beauty. Like “ Boadicea ” it is a voice out of the Past, sonorous, strange, semi-barbaric. What old ancestor of yours is it thus speaking through you ?



The Fifth Act is a masterly piece of dramatic writing. I know not where to look for anything better.

This being the shortest day of the year I make my letter correspond.

I wish you knew, I wish you could possibly know, the power of your poetry in this country. It would make your heart go forth towards the thirty or forty million of English on this side of the Atlantic.

With cordial congratulations on your great success, and kind remembrances,

Your friend and admirer,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

*From Robert Browning*

19 WARWICK CRESCENT, Dec. 21st, 1876.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

True thanks again, this time for the best of Christmas presents, another great work, wise, good and beautiful. The scene where Harold is overborne to take the oath is perfect, for one instance. What a fine new ray of light you are entwining with your many coloured wreath !

I know the Conqueror's country pretty well : stood last year in his Castle of Bonneville, on the spot where tradition is that Harold took the oath ; and I have passed through Dives, the place of William's embarkation, perhaps twenty times : and more than once visited the church there, built by him, where still are inscribed the names of the Norman knights who accompanied him in his expedition. You light this up again for me. All happiness befall you and yours this good season and ever.

Yours affectionately, R. BROWNING.

*Answer to Robert Browning*

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE.

*After-dinner talk between husband and wife*

*W.* Why don't you write and thank Mr. Browning for his letter?

*H.* Why should I? I sent him my book and he acknowledged it.

*W.* But such a great and generous acknowledgement.

*H.* That's true.

*W.* Then you should write: he has given you your crown of violets.

*H.* He is the greatest-brained poet in England. Violets fade, he has given me a crown of gold.

*W.* Well, I meant the Troubadour crown of golden violets; pray write: you know I would if I could; but I am lying here helpless and horizontal and can neither write nor read.

*H.* Then I'll go up and smoke my pipe and write to him.

*W.* You'll go up and concoct an imaginary letter over your pipe, which you'll never send.

*H.* Yes, I will. I'll report our talk.

He goes up and smokes, and spite of pipe writes and signs himself

A. TENNYSON.

*From Aubrey de Vere*

*December 28th, 1876.*

MY DEAR ALFRED,

I do not like to defer longer sending you my most cordial thanks for sending me your “Harold.” I have already read the whole of it twice, and many parts of it much oftener, and it is probably better that I should write with the general effect of the work still broad and plain on my mind, than after a minute analysis of details had to some extent clouded my estimate of it as a whole. You know how heartily I admired it when you read it aloud to me : and I can honestly assure you that that admiration has not been less on reading it to myself. On that first occasion it may have derived an advantage from your reading ; but if so, the more careful attention one gives to what one reads with one’s own eyes fully compensated for whatever was lost. The great characteristic of this drama is to me that of an heroic strength blended with heroic simplicity, and everything in it harmonious with that predominant characteristic. Nearly all the characters are simple and the plot is eminently so. Perhaps the simplest of all the characters is that of Harold himself, and for that reason there is quite an extraordinary pathos in the malicious might of those circumstances which force his feet off the straight ways and into those perplexed paths for which they have no inclination. The extreme simplicity of the drama requires a corresponding amount of strength to make it effective, and a sort of Æschylean strength seems to me to belong to it everywhere, to its characters, its action, its passions, its style and diction, and to all its most remarkable

passages. This strength increases to the end, and sums itself up in that grand battle-scene with its Latin "choruses" (as they might be called) which constitutes the chief part of the fifth Act. In Greece (and I suppose everywhere) Dramatic poetry came later than Narrative; and though more an expansion of the Choral Ode, yet in some of the earlier specimens retained something of an Epic character also; and I think that your Drama has something also of an Epic spirit combined with its dramatic form. It is a great thing to have had this wonderful crisis in our early English History added to our great dramatic gallery.

Ever affectionately yours,

AUBREY DE VERE.

*From Dean Stanley*

DEANERY, WESTMINSTER,  
*December 25th, 1876.*

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

I will gladly contrive if you wish to transmit your poem to the Queen. I know that Her Majesty is expecting it.

I ought ere this to have thanked you for my own copy. It cheered some mournful winter evenings for me, and it will, I trust, for the country at large, revive or rekindle the dying torch of Truth and the belief that there is something greater and nobler than capricious Norman Saints.

Yours sincerely, A. P. STANLEY.

*From Edward FitzGerald*

LOWESTOFT, *December 30th, 1876.*

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED,

“Harold” came, King Harold. But I still yearn after a Fairy Prince who came from other skies than these rainy ones, with his joyful eyes, “foxfooted step,” and his mantle glittering on the rocks. Impute this to my old prejudice, childish taste, whatever you will, except my ceasing to be your loyal old Fitz.

I scarce know if it be worth writing to say this : you knew it all beforehand : still, I suppose it is proper to acknowledge such a present. At any rate it gives me an opportunity to wish you and yours all good for coming 1877, a wish that I think you would also guess without my writing. Here I have a book of old Spanish Romances familiar to Don Quixote and Sancho. I shall write you out a *rather* pretty one which I read yesterday, and remain

Yours as ever, E. F. G.

There is not much in it, if you take the trouble to construe ; but I like the lady with her old husband partner, managing to address the young Count, perhaps as she passes him in the dance, bit by bit as the figure brings her round again.

*From G. H. Lewes*

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY,  
GODALMING, *18th June, 1877.*

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

We have just read “Harold” (for the first time) and “Mary” (for the fourth) and greatly

wished you had been here to read certain scenes, especially that masterly interview between Harold and William, or that most pathetic close of "Mary." It is needless for me to say how profound a pleasure both works have given us—they are great contributions! and your wretched critics who would dissuade you from enriching literature with such dramas must be forgiven, "for they know not what they say." It is not however to carry the coals of applause to your Newcastle that I scribble these lines, but to enquire whether there is a hope of your being at Blackdown this summer and of seeing you?

Yours truly, G. H. LEWES.

## “BECKET”

*(Printed 1879; published 1884)*

In 1879 my father printed the first proofs of his tragedy of “Becket,” which he had begun in December 1876. But he considered that the time was not ripe for its publication; and this therefore was deferred until December 1884. We had visited Canterbury in August 1877, and gone over each separate scene of Becket’s martyrdom. “Admirers of Becket,” my father notes, “will find that Becket’s letters, and the writings of Herbert of Bosham, Fitzstephen, and John of Salisbury throw great light on those days. Bishop Lightfoot found out about Rosamund for me.”

The play is so accurate a representation of the personages and of the time, that J. R. Green said that all his researches into the annals of the twelfth century had not given him “so vivid a conception of the character of Henry II. and his court as was embodied in Tennyson’s ‘Becket.’”

To my father it was interesting to learn the impression made upon Roman Catholics by this

work. He first asked the opinion of his neighbour at Freshwater, W. G. Ward. He could not have asked a more candid, truth-speaking critic than this "most generous of all Ultramontanes," who was deeply versed not only in the spirit and doctrine of his own Church, but also in the modern French and English drama. My father once said of Ward when speaking to a friend of Roman Catholic casuistry: "Well, one of the most truthful men I ever met was a strict Ultramontane: he was grotesquely truthful." They thoroughly understood each other, for Ward was "full of fun and faith." So it came to pass that my father often discussed religion and Roman Catholicism with him in their walks together. He once said to Ward, "You know you would try to get me put in prison if the Pope bid you." Ward replied, "The Pope would never tell me to do anything so foolish."

It may be imagined that we looked forward with some anxiety to the evening when Ward had promised to be at Farringford to hear "Becket." He came, as it afterwards appeared, to listen patiently, though convinced "that the whole play would be out of his line." At the end of the play he broke out into enthusiastic praise. "Dear me! I did not expect to enjoy it at all. It is splendid! How wonderfully you have brought out the phases of his character as Chancellor and Archbishop! Where did you get it all?"



Struggle for power under one guise or another has doubtless been among the most fruitful sources of theme for tragedy. During many centuries, as we know, “spiritual power,” clothed in earthly panoply, seemed to most men to be the one embodiment of the Divine Power. What struck Ward in my father’s play was the clear and impressive manner in which he had brought out Becket’s feeling that in accepting the Archbishopric he had changed masters, that he was not simply advanced to a higher service of the same liege lord, but that he had changed his former lord paramount, whose fiery self-will made havock of his fine intellect, for one of higher degree ; and had become a power distinct from and it might be antagonistic to the King. Thus Becket says, still loving his old friend :

The worldly bond between us is dissolved,  
Not yet the love : can I be under him  
As Chancellor ? as Archbishop over him ?

My father’s view of Becket was as follows : Becket was a really great and impulsive man, with a firm sense of duty, and, when he renounced the world, looked upon himself as the head of that Church which was the people’s “tower of strength, their bulwark against throne and baronage.” This idea so far wrought in his dominant nature as to betray him into many rash acts ; and later he lost himself in the idea. His enthusiasm reached a spiritual ecstasy which carries

the historian along with it; and his humanity and abiding tenderness for the poor, the weak and the unprotected, heighten the impression so much as to make the poet feel passionately the wronged Rosamund's reverential devotion for him (most touchingly rendered by Ellen Terry), when she kneels praying over his body in Canterbury Cathedral.<sup>1</sup>

As a stage tragedy (adapted by Irving) Irving has told us that "Becket" is one of the three most successful plays produced by him at the Lyceum. "'Becket' is a finer play than 'King John,'" he wrote to my father. Palgrave has observed that "Becket" has two excellent characteristics of the old Greek drama, that of bringing the four protagonists prominently throughout before the audience: and that of introducing the crisis of the tragedy in a scene of first-rate comedy. Irving's arrangement has been criticised as too episodal; but the thread of human interest remains strong enough for its purpose, as from first to last it holds the audience in an attitude of rapt attention. Assuredly Irving's interpretation of the many-sided, many-mooded, statesman-soldier-saint was as vivid and as subtle a piece of acting as has been seen in our day.

He says truly that one of the chief keynotes of the character is to be found in the following lines, which he always gave with an indescribable

<sup>1</sup> In the play Rosamund is the king's wife by a left-handed marriage.

tenderness, as if looking back to and recalling the daydream of his youth.

*Becket.* There was a little fair-hair'd Norman maid,  
Lived in my mother's house : if Rosamund is  
The world's rose, as her name imports her—she  
Was the world's lily.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, and what of her ?

*Becket.* She died of leprosy.

*John of Salisbury.* I know not why  
You call these old things back again, my lord.

*Becket.* The drowning man, they say, remembers all  
The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

In 1879 Irving refused the play : but in 1891 he asked leave to produce it, holding that the taste of the theatre-going public had changed in the interval, and that it was now likely to be a success on the stage.

He writes to me (1893) :

We have passed the fiftieth performance of “Becket,” which is in the heyday of its success. I think that I may, without hereafter being credited with any inferior motive, give again the opinion which I previously expressed to your loved and honoured father. To me “Becket” is a very noble play, with something of that lofty feeling and that far-reaching influence, which belong to a “passion play.” There are in it moments of passion and pathos which are the aim and end of

dramatic art, and which, when they exist, atone to an audience for the endurance of long acts. Some of the scenes and passages, especially in the last act, are full of sublime feeling, and are with regard to both their dramatic effectiveness and their poetic beauty as fine as anything in our language. I know that such a play has an ennobling influence on both the audience who see it and the actors who play in it.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the last lines which my father ever wrote are at the end of the Northampton scene, an anthem-speech written for Irving.

The voice of the Lord is in the voice of the people.

The voice of the Lord is on the warring flood,  
And He will lead His people into peace !

The voice of the Lord will shake the wilderness,  
The barren wilderness of unbelief !

The voice of the Lord will break the cedar-trees,  
The Kings and Rulers that have closed their ears  
Against the Voice, and at their hour of doom

The voice of the Lord will hush the hounds of  
Hell

In everlasting silence.

The story of Henry and Rosamund had long ago attracted him, and the germ of the play is to be found in a little song written before 1842.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Stanford's incidental music has not received the credit which it deserves, for it is eminently artistic and imaginative.—His identification of Becket with the Gregorian melody "*Telluris ingens conditor*" is particularly impressive.

*Rosamund's Bower. (Unpublished)*

*Rosamund loquitur*

What rustles hither in the dark ?

A step ? a footfall ? What is that I hear ?

The night is black and still ; the deer

Bleat as with human voices in the park.

Is it the king ; is it my love

Coming along the secret ways ?

The man that round me wove

Inextricable brickwork maze in maze ?

It is not he ; far off from England's shore,

He comes no more.

An idle hope was in my breast,

My hope is false, my terror's true !

I shudder in my lonely nest,

And think a cunning hand has found the clue—

God be gracious to my soul !

*Letters about “ Becket ”*

*Dedication to the Lord Chancellor (Selborne)*

MY DEAR SELBORNE,

To you, the honoured Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor ;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies

of our modern theatre, has nevertheless, for so you have assured me, won your approbation.

Ever yours, TENNYSON.

*From the Earl of Selborne*

30 PORTLAND PLACE.

I have been prostrated for several days by a feverish cold, and when your present of "Becket" arrived here on Monday was not in a fit state to write.

But I can no longer delay thanking you for it and for the dedication. All of us, I suppose, who have so far come out conquerors in the great internal struggles of life as to have been enabled to play some part, in the hope that it may be for good, in the world, must share in the natural feeling of the ancients, who did not look upon death as Christians do, that there would be something, not the mere memory of places, offices or titles, and still less pompous memorials, to rescue our names from the obscurity and virtual oblivion which history has in store for all but a very few of those whose inner lives are as little known as mine. This makes me accept your dedication as the greatest real honour that has ever been done me: that you should be my *vates sacer* and let those remote generations of the best spirits among the English-speaking race, who will read your works, know that there was something in me which had won your friendship and esteem, is more than I could have hoped for.

Believe me ever affectionately yours,

SELBORNE.

*From The Right Honourable J. Bryce*

As I have been abroad for some time it was only a little while ago that I obtained and read your “Becket.” Will you, since you were so kind as to read me some of it last July, let me tell you how much enjoyment and light it has given me? Impressive as were the parts read, it impresses one incomparably more when studied as a whole. One cannot imagine a more vivid, a more perfectly faithful picture than it gives both of Henry and of Thomas. Truth in history is naturally truth in poetry ; but you have made the characters of the two men shine out in a way which, while it never deviates from the impression history gives of them, goes beyond and perfects history. This is eminently conspicuous in the way their relations to one another are traced ; and in the delineation of the influence on Thomas of the conception of the Church, blending with his own haughty spirit and sanctifying it to his own conscience. There is not, it seems to me, anything in modern poetry which helps us to realize, as your drama does, the sort of power the Church exerted on her ministers : and this is the central fact of the earlier middle ages. I wish you were writing a play on Hildebrand also. Venturing to say this to you from the point of view of a student of history, I scarcely presume to speak of the drama on its more purely literary side, how full of strength and beauty and delicacy it is, because you must have heard this often already from more competent critics.

Believe me always sincerely yours,

J. BRYCE.

## CHAPTER IX

REMINISCENCES BY THE RIGHT HON.

W. E. H. LECKY

FROM 1874 to 1880 I have but few notes, except about our visits to London. Mr. Lecky, however, has kindly supplied me with the following recollections of this period :

You ask me to put down a few recollections of your father. It is with some difficulty that I do so, for many years have passed since I had the privilege of being much with him, and I knew too well his deep hatred of the common fashion of journalising in a great man's house, and writing down for future publication the careless utterances of free conversation, to be guilty of such an act. I must rely wholly on my memory, and I am afraid that to you, who knew him so much better than I did, these few notes can be of little use.

It was towards the close of the sixties that I had first the honour of knowing your father, and he invited me to accompany him to Farringford. We spent the night at Winchester, and next day went together over the cathedral, and visited the nonagenarian Dean Garnier, whose gracious courtesy in extreme old age, and whose solemn words of blessing as he said farewell to your



father, still remain vividly in my memory. In many days at Farringford, on this and other later occasions, I came to know your father well, and long walks with him gave me much insight into his ways of thinking and feeling. His natural shyness seemed to me to have been afterwards considerably mitigated by periods of residence in London, but when I first knew him it was very apparent, and it was a good deal aggravated by his great short-sightedness. I well remember in one of our first walks his alarm at a flock of sheep which he took for tourists. There always seemed to me to be a strange and somewhat pathetic contrast between his character and his position. Nature evidently intended him for the life of the quietest and most secluded of country gentlemen, for a life spent among books and flowers and a few intimate friends, and very remote from the noise and controversies of the great world. Few men valued more highly domestic privacy. But a great gift had made his name a household word among the English race. True privacy, as he bitterly complained, became impossible to him, and troops of tourists, newspaper writers and interviewers were constantly occupied with his doings.

It was a surprise to me to find that he possessed a strong sense of humour, delighted in witty stories and told them admirably. This was a side of his nature which never, I think, appeared in his writings before "The Northern Farmer," which was published early in the sixties.

I found too that he was not only a great poet, but also the best critic of verse I had ever known. His ear for all the delicacies of rhythm has, I suppose, very seldom been equalled. He had an admirable verbal memory for the poetry of others as well as for his own, and he had the true instinct of genius in detecting among commonplace surroundings some happy phrase or some

original metaphor. His taste lay chiefly in sixteenth and seventeenth century poetry, in which he was widely read, and which he used to quote with admirable power. I can still remember the almost terrible force he threw into the noble lines of Rochester on the "Vanity of Human Reason."

"Reason, an *ignis fatuus* of the mind,  
Which leaves the light of Nature, sense behind,  
Pathless and dangerous wandering ways it takes,  
Through Error's fenny bogs and thorny brakes;  
While the misguided follower climbs with pain  
Mountains of whimsies heaped in his own brain.  
Till Old Age and Experience hand in hand  
*Lead* him to Death and *make* him understand,  
After a search so painful and so long,  
That *all* his life he has been in the wrong."

In eighteenth century poetry he especially admired Burns, whom he placed, I think, on almost as high a level as Carlyle did, and his admiration was rather increased than diminished by the skill with which Burns, by a few strokes of genius, immortalised so many of the old songs of Scotland and incorporated great parts of them in his own poetry. "Burns did for the old songs of Scotland," he said, "almost what Shakespeare had done for the English drama that preceded him." Among nineteenth century poets I think he placed Keats on the highest pinnacle. He maintained (like Landor) that he had more of the real gift even than Shelley, and he thought it difficult to over-estimate the height to which he might have risen if he had lived. Byron he seemed to place on a lower level, and he considered his poetry too much akin to rhetoric. In discussing him I once quoted the exquisite passage in "The Giaour" beginning:

“He who hath bent him o’er the dead  
Ere the first day of death is fled,”

comparing Greece to the dead man in the moment after death. Your father admitted its beauty, but said that to his taste the idea was too beaten out. “A Greek poet would have conveyed it by a single stroke. He would have said ‘The face of the land is as the smile of the dead.’” He lamented that Campbell in “The Battle of the Baltic” had spoilt the intense reality and truthfulness of one of the noblest patriotic odes in the language by one false and jarring note :

“And the mermaid’s song condoles.”

He admired much the plays of his old friend Henry Taylor, but complained that they were too uniformly stately, that he “never laid aside the cothurnus.”

We naturally talked much about his own poetry. He said that he had great difficulty about a subject and a framework, a definite beginning and ending, but when these were found composition cost him very little trouble. “Guinevere,” perhaps the most perfect of his “Idylls,” was written in a fortnight. He had written out parts of the last “Idylls” in old English prose before turning them into verse. A letter once appeared in the *Spectator* written by Mr. Knowles, who at that time was scarcely known in the literary world, representing King Arthur as conscience, and treating the “Idylls” as an allegory or picture of the different ways in which men looked on conscience, some reverencing it as a heaven-born king, others ascribing to it a purely earthly origin, while others simply obeyed it without forming any theory about its source. Your father gave me this letter, saying that it was the best account that had yet been given of his poem.

I confess, however, that in spite of a beautiful image in "Guinevere" which seems to corroborate this view I have always thought that the allegory must have been in a great measure an afterthought. He had originally intended to write twelve "Idylls," one for each knight of the Round Table. He mentioned as an illustration of the uncertainty of critical judgments, that while the great majority of his critics complained that the "Idylls" had deteriorated after the first series, FitzGerald, the author of the translation of "Omar Khayyâm," whose opinion he valued very highly, steadily maintained that "The Holy Grail" was the best of them all.

In his conversation that minutely accurate observation of nature which is so conspicuous in his poetry, was very evident. He had a strong sense of the force and rhythm of words, and his knowledge of old English and of vivid provincial expressions was very great. "How infinitely superior," he said, "is the provincial word *flitter-mouse* to the orthodox *bat*! With his love for old English he combined some taste for old forms of pronunciation. He once rebuked me for pronouncing "knowledge" in the way which is now usual, maintaining that the full sound of "know" should be given. I defended myself by quoting Swift's lines on the Irish Parliament :

"Not a bow-shot from the college,  
Half the world from sense and knowledge,"

but he only said he hoped I would never pronounce the word in this way in reading his poetry.

He had no kind of sympathy with the theory which would divorce art from morals, and I have known no literary man who had a more uniformly high sense of duty in connection with his work. It was a sense of duty not only to the living and the unborn,

but also, and in a very marked degree, to the dead. In speaking of the character of Becket, I remember his expressing the dread he always felt, lest he should do some injustice to the actions or motives of those who are in their graves. He hated with an intense hatred all literary quarrels, and rivalries, and jealousies, and his literary judgment seemed to me not only singularly sane and unexaggerated, but also singularly unbiassed by his personal likings. On the other hand, his many and close friendships had little or nothing to say to literary affinities. Carlyle, who never cared for his poetry, and indeed seemed always to think that he would have done better to have written in prose, was one of his oldest and most valued friends. Many persons spoke of your father as too much occupied with his own poetry. It did, no doubt, fill a very large place in his thoughts, and it is also true that he was accustomed to express his opinions about it with a curiously childlike simplicity and frankness. But at bottom, his nature seemed to me singularly modest. No poet ever corrected so many lines in deference to adverse criticism. His sensitiveness seemed to me curiously out of harmony with his large powerful frame, with his manly dark colouring, with his great massive hands and strong square-tipped fingers. It is probable, however, that it was closely connected with the gift that made him so delicate an interpreter of the finer shades of feeling, and also with the extreme tenderness of nature with which he shrank from all infliction of suffering. He once told me the well-known story of how some mischievous men made a bet that they would drive a strong young farmer of their acquaintance in alarm to his bed, and how they succeeded by coming to him one by one, inquiring with well-simulated anxiety about his health, deploring his

bad looks, asking him if he felt no strange sensation, and entreating him to take care of himself, and he owned that a few friends could in the same way persuade him that anything he wrote was worthless. The popularity of his poems sometimes seemed to bewilder him, and I have heard him gravely express his belief that it was largely due to his official position as Laureate.

As is always the case with great writers, resemblances to something he had written were often found in books which he had never read, and in languages which he did not know, and he complained with much reason that there were critics who imagined that the same idea could never occur independently to two men looking on the same aspects of Nature. "Tennyson suspected of plagiarism!" I once heard Browning say, when this subject was mentioned: "Why, you might as well suspect the Rothschilds of picking pockets." He had, however, the skill which most great writers possess, of drawing knowledge and thought from all about him. Among his friends was Mr. G. F. Watts, and though your father, I think, had little real technical knowledge of art he fully *felt* the charm of that great imaginative painter. He once asked Mr. Watts to describe his ideal of what a true portrait-painter should be, and he embalmed the substance of Mr. Watts's reply in some of the noblest lines in the "Idylls."<sup>1</sup>

As when a painter, poring on a face,  
Divinely, thro' all hindrance, finds the man  
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
The shape and colour of a mind and life,  
Lives for his children, ever at its best—

<sup>1</sup> My father had thought of writing for his last volume a poem to Watts on his great imaginative pictures, and on their common love of the golden spring crocus.

Freshwater society, in the days of which I am writing, had a singular charm. Among the permanent residents in the neighbourhood were Mr. Watts, Mr. Ward the well-known Catholic metaphysician and reviewer, and that true artist and most gifted woman Mrs. Cameron. Miss Thackeray made many long visits. Sir John Simeon ("the prince of courtesy" of a very beautiful poem) sometimes came over from Swainston, and Farringford received many illustrious visitors from London, Oxford and Cambridge. Among the strangers who stayed there was Longfellow, for whom your father conceived a deep affection, and whom he described as one of the most enchanting of men. There was a delightful flavour in the house of the best intellectual society mingling with the tastes and habits of the most genuine country life. The country, however, always seemed to predominate, and some of us were made duly conscious of our town ignorance by the searching questions that were put to us about the flowers and trees which your father knew so well and loved so much. I remember myself once falling into some disgrace when having judiciously confessed my ignorance in many cases, I too confidently pronounced a flower to be a cowslip which was in truth an oxlip; and your father declared that he had persuaded one charming town-bred lady, to whom he was much attached, that a common daisy was a peculiar kind of rhododendron only found in the Isle of Wight. Apart from poetry there were several subjects on which he had read widely. He followed with keen and intelligent interest the great scientific discoveries of the day, and he delighted in travels and natural history. His later works were largely historical, and he read for them very conscientiously.

Your father thought much about religious matters,

and often dwelt with great force on his intuitive conviction of immortality, with its corollaries of Theism and Providence. These beliefs he held very strongly, but they were, I think, wholly detached in his mind from the dogmas of particular creeds. He had a decided leaning to some kinds of metaphysics, and the writings of James Hinton especially came home to him in a way which I could not share, or indeed understand. As all attentive readers of his poetry will have perceived, he was much occupied with, and disturbed by, the subversive theories that were abroad, but chiefly I think on account of their bearing on the great primal beliefs which I have mentioned, which he believed to be the main pillars on which the goodness, happiness and dignity of man must ultimately rest. Among his poems relating to these subjects the one which fascinated me the most was "Lucretius," in which he described with wonderful skill and subtlety the feelings of a convinced Materialist, who, having drunk the love-potion which his wife had given him, sees palpable visions of what seemed spirit-forms around him, and at last cuts the knot of his perplexity by suicide; and who when his wife confessed what she had done, died without a word of anger or reproach in his firm belief that all human actions are linked together in a chain of inexorable necessity. I do not think, however, that your father altogether approved of my preference, and when I quoted with admiration the lines:

Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end—

he said that my liking for them only showed the morbidness of my nature.

My memory of your father goes back to many different scenes, to the garden and downs of Farringford,



to the lovely terrace at Aldworth, to great uninteresting London crowds, in which I think he was much out of his element, to small dinners with Browning and a few other congenial spirits. I was once with him at the Lyceum at a representation of "The Cup," to which he had just added a new passage, and when between the acts Ellen Terry came into the box where we were sitting, I was much struck with the skill and judgment of his criticism of the acting. Perhaps, however, the most pleasing recollection of all is our journey together to Salisbury. I had been staying at Farringford, and was going thence to visit Stonehenge, which I had never seen, when about a quarter of an hour before the time of starting your father very unexpectedly declared that he would accompany me. You will remember the two lovely May-days (in 1879) we spent in visiting Stonehenge, and Salisbury Cathedral, and Amesbury, the last home of Guinevere, and George Herbert's church, and the great Vandykes at Wilton. Carlyle and Emerson once made the same excursion, and Emerson has described it in his *English Traits*. We knew or visited no one, and the gardens of Wilton, where we long sat together, were a perfect dream of beauty. It is one of those recollections which abide with one for a life, and it never rose more vividly before me than when twelve years later I stood by your father's coffin in Westminster Abbey.

## CHAPTER X

### ALDWORTH AND LONDON

1874-1879

Farringford he never forsook, though he added another home to it; and assuredly no poet has ever before called two such residences his own. Both of them were sweetened by the presence there, so graciously prolonged, of her to whom the lovers of Song owe so deep a debt of gratitude. The second home was as well chosen as the first. It lifted England's great poet to a height from which he could gaze on a large portion of that English land which he loved so well, see it basking in its most affluent summer beauty, and only bounded by "the inviolate sea." Year after year he trod its two stately terraces with men the most noted of their time, statesmen, warriors, men of letters, science and art, some of royal race, some famous in far lands, but none more welcome to him than the friends of his youth. Nearly all of those were taken from him by degrees; but many of them stand successively recorded in his verse. The days which I passed there yearly with him and his were the happiest days of each year. They will retain a happy place in my memory during whatever short period my life may last: and the sea-murmurs of Freshwater will blend with the sighing of the woods around Aldworth, for me, as for many more worthy, a music, if mournful, yet full of consolation.

*MS. Note, Aubrey de Vere.*

IN April 1874 the regular journal, giving the bare facts of our daily life, which my father had

wished my mother to keep for his private use, comes to an end, so that I have no longer this on which to depend for the exact date as to days.

Owing to my mother's illness I did not return to Cambridge after the Christmas of 1875, but remained at home as my father's secretary, a capacity in which there was much to be done.

Yet he would willingly have set me free for a more definite career; and at one time he consulted Mr. Gladstone as to my taking up a political life. Gladstone wrote in answer that my father must recollect that a political life was "surrounded by an adamant wall," that a man in politics was apt to "lose the finer moral sense," and that the political outlook ahead was "full of storms."

Our life did not undergo much change. We stayed at Farringford, as of late, till the end of June or the beginning of July, and then went to Aldworth. That fine air effectually cured my father's summer hay-fever: and he could now thoroughly enjoy his walks and drives in the beautiful country round Blackdown and Haslemere.

Two places he particularly liked. One was "Waggoner's Wells" on Hindhead, where he wrote his "Flower in the crannied wall," and of which George Eliot said to him, "What a good place for a murder in a novel!" The other was the "Silent Pool" near Albury, beneath the

Merrow downs that look over Guildford. I have often heard him describe this pool—"The splendour and ripply play of light on the stream as it gushes from the chalk over the greensand bottom, the mackerel colours which flit about in the sunshine, and the network of the current on the surface of the pool like crystal smoke." "The water itself," he said, "was like what Keats says of Neptune's cave, the 'palace floor breath-air.'"

The motto he proposed for a new sundial in his garden was the old "*Horas non numero nisi serenas.*" As years went by he became calmer and more restful in himself. To plant new trees, and to watch the growth of what were already planted, continued to be unfailing sources of pleasure to him. His hours of work were somewhat changed, Sir Andrew Clark having insisted on his walking before luncheon, and resting afterwards.

With his crook-handled stick, and accompanied by my brother, or myself, or a friend, and by a dog, he would tramp over hill and dale, not caring if the weather were fair or foul, every now and then stopping in his rapid walk to give point to an argument or to an anecdote. When alone with me, he would often chant a poem that he was composing, and add fresh lines. There was the same keen eye as of old for strange birds and flowers, and, as of old, he would make a point of looking up a strange bird or a new flower as soon as he returned home

from his walk. If a tourist were seen coming towards him, he would flee: for many would recognize from a distance his broad-brimmed wideawake (the kind of hat that Carlyle, Sir Henry Taylor, and others of his contemporaries wore) and his short blue cape with velvet collar, and would deliberately make for him in order to put some question. His hours were quite regular: he breakfasted at 8, lunched at 2, dined at 7. At dessert, if alone, he would read to himself, or if friends were in the house, he would sit with them for an hour or so, and entertain them with varied talk. He worked chiefly in the morning over his pipe, or in the evening after his pint of port, also over his pipe. Rare books or books with splendid bindings he never cared for; yet he treasured his first edition of Spenser's *Faery Queen*, and his second edition of *Paradise Lost*. He would read over and over again his favourite authors, and his delight was genuine when he came across a new author who "seemed to have something in him." He was not unfrequently abstracted in mood for days while he was composing, which made him appear brusque to strangers, but alone with his family he was never so happy as when engaged on a great subject. His very directness and simplicity moreover caused him sometimes to be misunderstood. With strangers doubtless he was shy at first, owing mostly to his short-sight, though none could be more genial when he

thawed. No one could have been more tolerant of or more gracious to dull people ; and out of his imaginative large-heartedness he usually invested every one with higher qualities than he or she possessed. As Jowett observed, "he would sit by a very commonplace person, telling stories with the most high-bred courtesy, endless stories not too high or too low for everyday conversation." With the country folk he loved to converse ; especially seeking out the poor *old* men, from whom he always tried to ascertain their thoughts upon death and the future life.

His afternoons he generally spent on one of our smaller lawns, surrounded by birch and different sorts of pine and fir and cypress, after the fashion of separate green parlours. Here he would read the daily papers or some book to my mother lying out in her sofa-chair, or would receive friends from the neighbourhood, or would talk to guests staying in the house.

By degrees luncheon became later, partly because of the two hours' walk which had been ordered in the morning, and partly because of the trains which brought friends from London ; and not seldom he went to town.

In March 1875 I find a note after he had seen Irving in *Hamlet* : "It is not a perfect Hamlet : the pathetic side of him well done, and the acting original. I liked it much better than Macready's. Irving came into the box, and we had a talk : he is a taking man."

In the summer my mother had sufficiently recovered to go with my father, my brother and myself to Pau, whence my father<sup>1</sup> and I made a tour in the Western Pyrenees. At Pau, meanwhile, Lionel became engaged to Eleanor Locker, whom as a child we had known well, and who was like one of our own family. The engagement had not been in any way foreseen ; but it was as welcome as so anxious an event can be to those whose life has been with and for their children. My father writes thus to the Duke of Argyll :

MY DEAR DUKE,

I had my garden gravelled when I made the terrace in front of the house at Aldworth. Many cartloads came over the hill. I should think it more probable that the flint found by you was dropt there, than that it had been left there since the denudation.

Tell the Duchess if she do not know it that Lionel, my youngest son, is engaged to Miss Eleanor Locker, who is half a Bruce and half a "London Lyric." The Queen has been very kind about it ; we have known her from a child and approve of her heartily ; but as he is only twenty-one they must wait till he get some employment, of which at present I see small prospect.

<sup>1</sup> On this journey he took Balzac's novels with him, especially delighting in *Le père Goriot* and *Eugénie Grandet*.

I trust the Duchess is bearing the winter well.

With our love to her, yours ever,  
A. TENNYSON.

On our return to Farringford Mrs. Procter came to visit us, and wrote after :

I cannot tell you what a happy time we had at Farringford. If I am not better for it, I ought to be ; talking with A. T. seemed to lift me out of the earth-eathy. It was like what a retreat is to the religious.

In November<sup>1</sup> 1875 my father said : “I know it is the custom to prophesy change in France, but I am not so sure that the Republic, which M. Rouher denounced, will not surprise many of them in its duration. They can have perpetual change of their men in power now.”

December brought Edward FitzGerald's usual Christmas letter.

MY DEAR ALFRED,

The time of year has come about when I have earned a right to hear a little about you all—Mrs. Tennyson especially. But I suppose I must wait till one of your boys is at home ; which must soon be, for here is Christmas close by. Then a son must write me a bit of a letter. You know that I wish you all well and happy at Christmas and after. I have been told of Mrs. Leslie Stephen's death, which must be a terrible

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, p. 346, for translations of Franklin epitaph sent to him by Gladstone this November.



thing for Annie Thackeray. Only about a fortnight ago she was telling me by letter what a sister she had.

As Spedding and Pollock (whom I asked about it) told me they had given their names to the Carlyle conspiracy, so did I, much wondering how Masson came to know of my existence. But I must say I thought the whole thing rather a cockney affair—*Address and Medal and White Satin Scroll*, which some dozen years ago, I think Carlyle would have been tempted to blow his nose upon, as the Sandwich Islanders did with their playbills at the Theatre. Only I never did see Carlyle use a handkerchief. . . . It is fine of him to be eighty : I shall write him also my best 1875 letter. He seems to have passed the summer cheerfully and well in Kent. I see — has another of his uncouth works out : I call him the great Prophet of the Gargoyle School : in France they have a man equally disagreeable to me—Victor Hugo. I think it partly is because the beautiful things have been done from the time of the Greeks to A. T., and so those who can't do them better prove their originality by descanting on the Ugly ; and they have their day. And I am your sincere and trusty old bedesman,

E. F. G.

In September 1876 my father and I visited FitzGerald at Woodbridge. He was affectionate, genial, and humorous, declaring that the captain of his lugger was one of the greatest of men. The views that Fitz expressed to me on literature were original and interesting, but the old man never got off his own platform to look at the work of modern authors. He had always wanted men like Thackeray and my father to go along

with his crotchets, which were many. He had not been carried away by their genius out of himself and out of his own old Cambridge critical groove ; and had not, like them, grown with the times. After we had arrived home he wrote :

WOODBIDGE, *Sept. 26th*, 1876.

I am glad you were pleased with your short visit here. Perhaps you will one day, one or both of you, come again : and, if you will but give warning, and no nieces are in possession of the house, it shall be ready for you, and some *tender* meat provided. Somehow I, when you were gone, felt somewhat abroad, and a few hours after went to an old village by the sea, Dunwich, once a considerable town, now swept into the sea, with the remains of a church on the cliff and the walls of an ancient priory beside. I was wishing that I had made you come with me, over a stretch of wild heath too, but there was no room in the little Inn : and dare say *very tough meat* ! *That* fatal reed sticks in my side you see. But I am still yours, and all yours, sincerely,

E. F. G.

In October we stayed with the Gladstones at Hawarden, my father accepting the invitation thus :

*October 25th*, 1876.

On Monday then, if all be well. As you are good enough to say that you will manage anything rather than lose my visit, will you manage that I may have my pipe in my own room whenever I like ?

The talk between Gladstone and my father was on Dante, "Harold," Gladstone's late speech about remitting the Income Tax, modern morality, the force of public opinion, the evils of materialism and the new Biblical criticism.

My father expressed the view that, "as the English language is much finer than the Italian for variety of sound, so Milton for sound is often finer than Dante." He quoted Milton, Virgil, Dante and Homer<sup>1</sup> to illustrate his meaning ; then said :

"What, for example, can be more monotonous than the first lines of the 'Inferno' with their 'a-s' ?

' Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita  
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,  
Chè la diritta via era smarrita '—

and so on."

After the visit my father wrote from Farringford :

MY DEAR MRS. GLADSTONE,

Here we are returned to our winter-quarters, which however we find at present colder than Aldworth. We retain golden memories of our visit to Hawarden, and your statesman, not like Diocletian among his cabbages but among his oaks, axe in hand. Has he anything to say about my drama ("Harold") ?

Always yours, A. TENNYSON.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the fine effect of the monotonous ending of words in -*av* at the beginning of the thirteenth book of the *Iliad*.

Gladstone answered :

It seems to me you have worked the history up to the acme of its capability. . . . I propose to quote, but without acknowledgement, in an article for the current *Contemporary Review* about the Hellenic part of the Eastern Question the two lines about the voice of the people . . .

The voice of any people is the sword  
That guards them or the sword that beats them down.

A letter of Jan. 13th, 1877, from the Hon. Sec. of the Burns Memorial, asks my father to be present at the unveiling of the statue in Glasgow. The Secretary says : "So enthusiastic are the people of the West of Scotland that the 25th (the date of unveiling) is to be held as a general holiday, and a procession of thirty or forty thousand is to take part in the proceedings." My father answered that he could not go—"Though I have as much veneration for the poet as if I had been born a Scotchman."

Great pleasure was given to my father by the following letter from Lord Lytton ; a graceful and cordial recognition of the intention shown in the dedication of "Harold" to obliterate the memory of the old literary passage-of-arms with his father.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii. p. 18. The dedication ran :

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON,

After old-world records—such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou,—Edward Freeman's *History of the Norman Conquest*, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his *Harold* to my father's brother ; allow me to dedicate my "Harold" to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

## ALDWORTH AND LONDON 1877

CALCUTTA,  
19th Jan., 1877.

DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

I am told by the English newspapers, received to-day, that you have dedicated to me your new dramatic poem "Harold." I have not yet seen the poem; but there must be an exception to every rule, and assuming that in this instance at least the newspapers tell the truth, I cannot let a mail go by without asking you to believe how flattered I am by the honour you have done me, and how sensibly touched by your manner of doing it. Memories the tenderest and most cherished of my life are strangely mingled with the hope your generosity has sanctioned, that I may live hereafter on your pages, associated with the name of their great author, to whom in common with all our countrymen, I already owe so much, and with that of my dear father, to whom I owe life itself, and all great things in life, nor least of all my share in the valued tribute so generously offered to his memory by England's greatest living Poet. In his name and for his sake, I thank you no less warmly than on my own behalf. It is a fact of which I was not aware until after his death, that the plot of almost every one of my father's novels was first worked out in the form of a play; and probably he owed to the habitual employment of this method much of his success as a romance writer in the dramatic development of character and situation. In the mass of his unpublished manuscripts I have found an unfinished dramatic sketch entitled "William the Norman" or "William the Conqueror" (I forget which), containing the undoubted germ of the historical romance to which reference is made in the dedication of your own poem. This manuscript is not with me in India; but, should I

live to return to England, I hope you will then accept from me a private copy of it, as a literary curiosity which will henceforth derive its chief interest from your own work. Meanwhile pray accept the sincere assurance of those grateful sentiments with which I am,

Dear Mr. Tennyson, your obliged

LYTTON.

In March 1877 my father wrote "Montenegro," which he always put first among his sonnets, writing thus to Mr. Gladstone: "Your talk interested me and my son so much that we quite forgot one of my two objects in calling on you, the first to gain your approval of that sonnet of which you were the inspirer; the second to ask if you could give us tickets of admission to the House for the great debate to-morrow, if it come on to-morrow, and about what time you may be expected to speak."

On March 28th my father and I dined with Lord Houghton at Almond's Hotel to meet Schliemann. In the course of conversation Schliemann said: "Hissarlik, the ancient Troy, is no bigger than the courtyard of Burlington House." "I can never believe that," my father replied. As we were leaving the room after dinner, Schliemann, duly impressed with the splendour of the entertainment, remarked to us of our host: "Our lord is a very glorious lord, is he not?"

In June Victor Hugo thanked my father in the following letter for the sonnet, addressed

## ALDWORTH AND LONDON 1877

to the great French poet, after my brother had visited him in Paris :

4 *Juin*, 1877, PARIS.

MON ÉMINENT ET CHER CONFRÈRE,

Je lis avec émotion vos vers superbes, c'est un reflet de gloire que vous m'envoyez. Comment n'aimerais-je pas l'Angleterre qui produit des hommes tels que vous ! l'Angleterre de Wilberforce ! l'Angleterre de Milton et de Newton ! l'Angleterre de Shakespeare ! France et Angleterre sont pour moi un seul peuple comme Vérité et Liberté sont une seule lumière. Je crois à l'unité divine.

J'aime tous les peuples et tous les hommes et j'admire vos nobles vers.

Recevez mon cordial serrement de main.

VICTOR HUGO.

J'ai été heureux de connaître votre charmant fils—il m'a semblé, que serrer sa main, c'était presser la votre.

In July I find a note from Sir Alexander Grant to Mr. Palgrave describing a visit to Farringford :

After I saw you in London I had a delightful visit to Freshwater, at least I found it so in spite of the most inclement weather. As the *Saturday Review* wisely remarks, "Nature brings not back the mastodon," in the case of visiting houses where of old we had divine hours. But yet at Farringford mine heart burned within me. The bard would not smoke as much as I could have wished, *he is very regular and methodical*, and

walks and sleeps by rule, which is uninteresting, but which, I hope, will cause him to live till ninety. I never knew him more hearty and kind.

In the evenings my father would now play at Dummy Whist, and on one occasion he so terrified a young lady by talking to Dummy as to a real person that she forthwith vanished to her own room. About this time a beautiful setter was given him. It suddenly struck him at midnight that the new dog might feel hungry and lonely, so he went downstairs and stole a chicken for the dog, "Dear old Don." Great was the discomfiture in the kitchen next morning as to what had become of the chicken.

In October he wrote to Mrs. Brookfield on her son's marriage :

*Oct. 11th, 1877.*

MY DEAR J. O. B.,

. . . Out of the distance I spread my hands over your son, and his future, if that—tho' I trust it may in some measure please you—can in any way avail him.

Your old friend who remembers you coming out on the balcony of the house at Southampton—I was walking with *him*<sup>1</sup> and he had just told me of his engagement.

A. TENNYSON.

<sup>1</sup> In 1874 my father had written an elegiac sonnet to his old college-friend Brookfield for Lord Lyttelton's memoir.



ALDWORTH AND LONDON 1877

At Christmas Longfellow sent him a friendly greeting :

CAMBRIDGE, *Nov. 27th*, 1877.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

Accept this brief Christmas greeting from me,  
with all good wishes for yourself and household.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

*Wapentake to Alfred Tennyson*

Poet ! I come to touch thy lance with mine,  
Not as a knight who on the listed field  
Of tourney touched his adversary's shield  
In token of defiance, but in sign  
Of homage to the mastery, which is thine  
In English song ; nor will I keep concealed,  
And voiceless as a rivulet frost-congealed,  
My admiration for thy verse divine.  
Not of the howling dervishes of song,  
Who craze the brain with their delirious dance,  
Art thou, O sweet historian of the heart !  
Therefore to thee the laurel-leaves belong,  
To thee our love and our allegiance,  
For thy allegiance to the poet's art.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

My father answered :

MY DEAR LONGFELLOW,

You have sent me a Christmas greet-  
ing : more than that, a Christmas gift in the

## 1877 LETTER FROM FITZGERALD

shape of a very perfect flower from your own spacious garden : wherefore I exult and stick it in my cap and defy my foes. I and wife and sons salute you and thank you and wish all happiness to you and yours here and hereafter.

With our kindest remembrances,  
Yours ever, A. TENNYSON.

*A propos* of Longfellow's greeting Edward FitzGerald wrote :

LITTLE GRANGE, WOODBRIDGE, Dec. 1877.

Will any one tell me anything of old Frederick? Three months ago, I think, he wrote me word of a house he had bought near Jersey, a wonderful bargain, which I told him would be about the first wonderful bargain he ever made in his life, so far as I could guess. Now a month or so ago I wrote to ask him about himself and his bargain : and, though he is not so liberal a letter-writer as the present, he generally satisfies me with some answer within such a time. Does any one at Farringford know about him? And will tell me? Be it noticed that being on distant terms with the whole Laureate Family, I address no one in particular : only am obliged to direct to that paltry poet who is the unworthy head. And, in spite of my wrongs, I do wish them all a happy Christmas and New Year, and am theirs according as they shall behave to

They know Whom.

That was a nice sonnet of Longfellow's to "The Laurell'd Head" ; the "howling dervishes" will tire out in their dance before long, I do think : never doubted but they would.

## ALDWORTH AND LONDON 1875-

O but then my Bil-ly listed,  
Listed and cross'd the roaring main :  
For King George he fought brave-ly  
In Po'tig'l, France, and Spain :  
Don't you see my Billy a-coming,  
Coming in yonder cloud :  
Gridiron Angels ho-vering round him,  
Don't you see him in yonder clouds ?

E. F. G.

On the 28th of February, 1878, Lionel and Eleanor Locker were married in Westminster Abbey. Dean Stanley was too ill to officiate ; but he sent for the young bride and bridegroom to his bedroom and gave them his blessing.

Frederick Locker writes to me in June 1878 :

I have a letter from Arthur [his brother] asking me if Herkomer may take a portrait of A. T. Herkomer himself says he will go to you wherever you may happen to be, and it will only occupy about three hours. I write in great haste, and I know I bore you by writing, but I do not like to refuse my brother, who, I fancy, likes Herkomer.

Herkomer's offer was accepted, and he came to Farringford and had sittings from my father.

From 1875 to 1882 we every year took a house in London, in Wimpole Street, in Upper Belgrave Street, Eaton Place and Eaton Square, in order to be near my brother whose work was at the India Office ; and as my father said, "To rub our country rust off." We always kept Christmas at Farringford, moving to London in February to

stay till Easter. During these years my father made many new acquaintances. Among these I may name the Selbornes, with whom my parents became close friends ; and who, fortunately for us, lived within driving distance of Aldworth.

On one occasion Ruskin lunched with us, adorned by his accustomed blue tie, kind and courteous as ever. He said that his inclination was to devote himself still to Art, but that he felt it a duty to give the remainder of his life to the education of the poorer classes. In his opinion "Everything bad is to be found in London and other large cities ; and only in life and work in country fields is there health for body and for mind." My father and he deprecated in the strongest possible language the proposed Channel Tunnel.

Before Ruskin took his leave, my father said to him :

"Do you know that most romantic of lyrics ?

He turn'd his charger as he spake,  
Upon the river shore,  
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,  
Said Adieu for evermore,  
My Love !  
And adieu for evermore."

"Do I not ?" said Ruskin, "I am so glad you like it, Tennyson ; I place it among the best things ever done by any one."

Upon a day, memorable to me, my father took me to Pembroke Lodge. He had a high esteem for Lord and Lady Russell ; "Plucky Lord John" he would call him. Lord Russell and my father had a strong bond in their common conviction that the English race was "destined to be the greatest among races." Both gloried in the "*Imperii porrecta Majestas*" of England and advocated an ever-closer union with our colonies.<sup>1</sup> My father believed that the federation so formed would be the strongest force for good and for freedom that the world has ever known. I have heard him say that he did not believe it hopeless that America should enter into a close alliance with such a league.

"The craven fear of being great" my father felt was among the besetting sins of certain English statesmen, and in reply to this Lord Russell would cry that there must be no niggardliness with regard to armaments, he being convinced that "If need were, we should be able to stand alone." My father particularly liked Lord Russell's high expectations from "the independence of nationalities." They both shook

<sup>1</sup> A letter which I wrote to the Colonial Institute after his death summarises my father's views on this subject :

"One of the deepest desires of his life was to help the realisation of the ideal of an Empire by the most intimate union of every part of our British Empire. He believed that every different member so united would, with a heightening of individuality to each member, give such strength and greatness and stability to the whole as would make our Empire a faithful and fearless leader in all that is good throughout all the world."

hands over the hope that now-a-days foreign ministers, whether Liberal or Conservative, had learnt to be alive to the need of continuity in our foreign policy.

On another not-to-be-forgotten day General Gordon came to us. He had lately arrived from Ireland, after having made there certain suggestions with regard to the land question. These were, I believe, the foundation of the "Ashbourne Act."

In answer to our invitation to luncheon he arrived suddenly, and asked to see me in the hall. Having learnt that we were alone, he glided spirit-like into the dining-room where we were already seated. Going straight up to my father, he said in a solemn voice: "Mr. Tennyson, I want you to do something for our young soldiers. You alone are the man who can do it. We want training-homes for them all over England." As it happened, we were at that time much interested in a project of James Baillie Hamilton's—a camp where gentlemen's sons might be prepared for the army or the colonies. We told the General of this and he allowed us to introduce Mr. Baillie Hamilton to him. It was finally agreed that if such a camp were founded the General would take the head, on condition that arrangements were made to admit also the sons of the poorest. The camp was never formed, the General was ordered to Mauritius, and the scheme of a training-home for the army fell through; until the Gordon

Home was initiated by my father, and founded by the Prince of Wales, after Gordon's death and in his memory.

What struck my father about Gordon was, he said, "his look of utter benevolence and bonhomie." He was to have returned and given my father more detail as to his young soldiers' camp, but he wrote :

I fear I must deprive myself of a great pleasure, viz. a smoke with Mr. Tennyson, for I am engaged, and on Sunday evening I generally stay at home. I hope when these east winds have ceased, and when you are back in town, I may come and see you unless I am already gone.

Believe me with kind regards yours sincerely,

C. E. GORDON.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following is an extract from a letter from Lady Cardwell :

74 EATON SQUARE, *April 9th*, 1878.

. . . It may interest you to know another instance of the solace you have given to those in distant lands severed from all those with whom they could hold converse.

You know all about Col. Gordon (Chinese Gordon) and the immense pressure upon him and the heroic services he is rendering to the cause of humanity in putting down the slave trade, as Governor of the Soudan, by a wonderful sacrifice of himself. I often hear from him of his long solitary rides of hundreds of miles in the desert and wilderness, and wished to find the most acceptable companion I could send to him.

It must be in a very small compass. Happily I found the beautiful edition of all your books in the small green case, and I sent it a few months ago.

He is intensely delighted with it and mentions it in every letter. In his last, lately received from Khartoum, he says : "I find the reading of Tennyson is my great relief, and the volumes are so small and of such clear print that they will always go with me. I have long wanted a small copy, but never knew that he had published one," etc.

For Matthew Arnold my father always had a warm regard, not only because he admired his best work, but also because he had known him at Coniston as a young man just entering on life. They met frequently in London. On one occasion, when he called, I remember my father was amused at what he called "Mat's sublime waggery," for "Mat" had said to me, probably to call forth a retort, "Your father has been our most popular poet for over forty years, and I am of opinion that he fully deserves his reputation."

Later I met Matthew Arnold at Mr. Goschen's, and my father gave me this message for him: "Tell Mat not to write any more of those prose things, like *Literature and Dogma*, but to give us something like his 'Thyrsis,' 'Scholar Gipsy,' or 'Forsaken Merman.'" "Mat" took the message in the best possible spirit, and told it gleefully about himself all over London.

Two or three times we met George Eliot in town, and she expressed herself much pleased that the poet who, she said, had "so much human blood in his poems and plays," should have told her that her "flight of Hetty in *Adam Bede* and Thackeray's gradual breaking down of Colonel Newcome were the two most pathetic things in modern prose fiction." He had the highest admiration for her insight into character, but did not think her quite



so true to nature as Shakespeare and Miss Austen.<sup>1</sup>

I read somewhere an account of a quarrel between her and my father, carried on in loud tones, with red faces and clenched fists, the subject being her want of belief in an after-life. I showed this to him, and he wrote down what actually happened. "I and she never had one moment of discussion, much less of quarrel. She called, and when she went away I pressed her hand kindly and sweetly, and said, 'I wish you well with your molecules.' She replied as gently, 'I get on very well with my molecules.'"

I have also the record of a later conversation between them which took place at Aldworth. They agreed as to "the namby-pambyism of the age, which hates a story to end in tragedy, as if the greatest moral lessons were not taught by tragedies." My father added, "What the public do not understand is that the great tragedy is all balance throughout." She then objected to the many English writers who set up French literature against our own, for "Is not ours," she said, "one of the greatest in the world?"

She wanted my father to make a poem of this story, which she narrated as true, and as having occurred in one of the midland counties. A drunkard boasted that he would "fight any bull ever born." He went out into the starlight

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the character of Adam Bede was "too much idealized."

and walked up to a well-known ferocious bull, dealing him a blow on the forehead which felled both man and bull. By that shock the man became "undrunk" and never drank again, so great was the terror which seized on him while lying there: the bull "nozzling" him; those big eyes, head and horns between him and the sky. George Eliot thought that my father would make a fine analysis of what passed in the man's mind as he lay there under the starry heavens.

In return for this my father told her a story of real life, about a sailor, devoted to music, who was always in requisition for sailors' dances, as he played superbly on the violin. But whenever he played his nerves were so excited that he took brandy to quiet them, and became in consequence invariably drunk after his music. One night when sailing up the Mississippi he brought out his violin under the broad moon, and then broke it over the side of the vessel; having resolved never to play violin more or get drunk again.

When the restoration of St. Mark's was contemplated George Eliot wrote to my father (she had asked him to protest against it):

Please, dear friend, send the letter about St. Mark's, Venice, without delay,—a dying struggle against the vandalism of the present age.

M. LEWES.

In November 1878 the lively, witty, kindly

George Lewes died, and my father wrote as follows to George Eliot, who was all but broken-hearted :

DEAR FRIEND,

Our affectionate sympathies are with you. That is all that can be said at present, and these "words" are nothing to you at present, but for his sake accept them. A. TENNYSON.

My father's first meeting with the Princess of Wales took place at Mrs. Greville's in Chester Square. The Princess asked him to read the "Welcome to Alexandra." When he had read it, the fact of his reading his own complimentary poem to the Princess herself somehow struck them both as being so ludicrous, that he dropt the book on the floor and both went into fits of uncontrollable laughter.

It was at this time that Lady Simeon had a wish to bring Newman and my father together. She therefore forwarded a message from my father to the effect that he would like to meet Newman whenever they happened to be in London together. Newman wrote as follows :

DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

*April 17th, 1877.*

I hope you will not think it a liberty in me thus to address you, but the kindness of your message to me by Lady Simeon encourages me to do so. While I acquiesce in the purport of it, I cannot help expressing the pleasure and the honour I should feel it to be

allowed to make your acquaintance. Great differences of opinion and personal history lie between us, but it would be strange if I *alone* of Englishmen did not feel the *force* of those endowments of mind which have made your name so popular. I am with great respect,  
Sincerely yours, J. H. NEWMAN.

Dr. Dabbs has recorded the following conversation that he had with my father about "In Memoriam" and Newman :

D. Do you think there is any really insuperable obstacle or series of obstacles between science and religion ?

T. I have tried to say my say about it in "In Memoriam."

D. Certainly no lack of religion there.

T. I hope not.

D. And all proper reverence for scientific facts ?

T. So there should be—(long pause). I sometimes think it is the least misunderstood of all my work. I don't mean that the commentators have been more right, but that the general reading public has been less wrong than usual as to my intentions.

D. I often wish, sir, that commentaries might cease or the poet himself supply them.

T. That can never be. And (after another long pause) the poet might not do them well.

D. He could not, in many cases, do them worse.

T. I am not sure (half smiling). He might !

D. I see Newman was asked as to his meaning in two lines of "Lead, kindly Light" and frankly acknowledged he had forgotten "what he was driving at."

T. He never used such a phrase as "what he was driving at."

D. No, no, that is mine.

T. Is that paraphrase or commentary, eh ?

D. Ah ! (Then there was a good laugh at my expense.)

T. I daresay Newman may have forgotten. It would be hard indeed to remember the "atmosphere" of each thought. When young men ask me the interpretation of some of my *early* lines, I sometimes forget, and can only answer with Goethe, "You probably know better than I do, being young."

Among the compliments paid my father, that which he valued most was his old friend Browning's dedication of a selection of his own poems :

*To Alfred Tennyson*

In poetry illustrious and consummate,  
In friendship noble and sincere.

Browning frequently dined with us. The *tête-à-tête* conversations between him and my father on every imaginable topic, when no one but myself was with them, were the best talk

I have ever heard, so full of repartee, quip, epigram, anecdote, depth and wisdom : but it is quite impossible to attempt to reproduce them, owing to their very brilliancy. These brother-poets were two of the most widely-read men of their time, absolutely without a touch of jealousy, and revelling as it were in each other's power.

On rare occasions my father would rally Browning playfully on his harshness of rhythm, the obscurity and length of his poems. The retort would be : "I cannot alter myself : the people must take me as they find me." My father would repeat his usual dictum about literary work : "An artist should get his workmanship as good as he can, and make his work as perfect as possible. A small vessel, built on fine lines, is likely to float further down the stream of time than a big raft." They would laugh heartily together at Browning's faculty for absurd and abstruse rhymes. I remember a dinner at Mr. Leslie Stephen's, where Jebb, Miss Thackeray, and Browning were present. Browning said he thought that he could make a rhyme for every word in the English language. We gave him "rhinoceros." He wrote down the following lines, saying that he had made them previously :

"O, if you should see a rhinoceros  
And a tree be in sight,  
Climb quick, for his might  
Is a match for the Gods, he can toss Eros."

At another time Browning produced for my father's amusement impromptu verses on Carlyle and his wife, "Terse Verse, being a contribution to Scottish Anthology," as he called it :

"Hail ye hills and heaths of Ecclefechan !  
Hail ye banks and braes of Craigenputtock !  
T. Carlyle was born in Ecclefechan,  
Jane his wife was born in Craigenputtock.  
She, a pearl where eye detect no speck can,  
He, ordained to close with and cross-buttock  
Cant, the giant—these, O Ecclefechan,  
These your glories be, O Craigenputtock !"

My father on the other hand confessed that he believed he knew the quantity of every word in the English language except perhaps "scissors." We asked him to make a Sapphic stanza in quantity, with the Greek cadence. He gave us this :

*Sapphics*<sup>1</sup>

Faded ev'ry violet, all the roses ;  
Gone the glorious promise ; and the victim,  
Broken in this anger of Aphrodite,  
Yields to the victor.

Browning had sent us his *Aristophanes' Apology* : "another jet from his full fountain,"

<sup>1</sup> Printed in Professor Jebb's *Primer of Greek Literature*, 1877.

as my father said ; and then he gave his *Inn Album* to my father, who wrote :

MY DEAR BROWNING,

You are the most brotherly of poets, and your brother in the muses thanks you with the affection of a brother. *She* would thank you too on paper if she could put hand to pen.

A. T.

While in London we often walked to the Westminster Deanery, for about Lady Augusta and the Dean there was "a good atmosphere of high work." Dean Stanley's courage and truth, and his delicate perceptions of things beautiful and spiritual, and his broad and generous sympathies and interests, fascinated my father. He often quoted a remark of the Dean's: "So far from being effete, Christianity is as yet undeveloped." A story that Stanley told (not mentioned in his *Life*) was, that after a great function in the Abbey he was coming out with Disraeli. The Dean was saying that the Athanasian Creed ought to be omitted from the Prayer Book. Disraeli looked up at him and replied, "Mr. Dean, no dogmas, no deans."

When Cleopatra's Needle was brought to London, Stanley asked my father to make some lines upon it; to be engraven on the base. These were put together by my father at once, and I made a note of them :



*Cleopatra's Needle*

Here, I that stood in On beside the flow  
 Of sacred Nile, three thousand years ago !—  
 A Pharaoh, kingliest of his kingly race,  
 First shaped, and carved, and set me in my place.  
 A Caesar of a punier dynasty  
 Thence haled me toward the Mediterranean sea,  
 Whence your own citizens, for their own  
     renown,  
 Thro' strange seas drew me to your monster  
     town.  
 I have seen the four great empires disappear !  
 I was when London was not ! I am here !

Renan called. My father thought him genial, acute and epigrammatic, and approved much of one of his epigrams, "La vérité est dans une nuance." Stories were told of Brittany and the Bretons ; and Renan was delighted when my father narrated how the landlady of the inn at Lannion had recognized "Monsieur Tennyson" as the poet of their King Arthur.

My father said that he had been disappointed with Carnac, and that Stonehenge was far finer. Renan discoursed on Carnac, and said that stones similar to the Carnac stones had been discovered in Algiers ; he believed that they were all symbols of tribal covenants. My father and he then discussed Villemarqué, and my father said

“Villemarqué est plus poète que savant”; to which Renan assented. The talk turned to the materialism and realism of the present day, against which my father inveighed. Renan said, “Ah yes, it is better to illuminate history with genius as you and others have done, than with mere research.” The retort was quick: “You are a prose-poet, Monsieur Renan, and perhaps in this instance too imaginative.”

My father was fond of asking Joachim to play to him in his own house. One particular evening I remember, at 86, Eaton Square. My father had been expressing his wonder at Joachim’s mastery of the violin,—for Joachim had been playing to us and our friends numberless Hungarian dances,—and by way of thanks for the splendid music I asked him to read one of his poems to Joachim. Accordingly after the guests had gone he took the great musician to smoke with him in his ‘den’ at the top of the house. There they talked of Goethe, especially praising a poem of Goethe’s old age, “*Der West-östliche Divan*,” and then my father read “*The Revenge*.” On reaching the line

And the night went down, and the sun smiled  
out far over the summer sea,

he asked Joachim, “Could you do that on your violin?”—the peace of nature after the thunder of the battle. There was no more reading however that night, for he suddenly turned

round to me, saying, "I must not read any more, else I shall wake up the cook who is sleeping next door."

Whenever a chance offered itself, we called on the Carlyles. My father would say, "Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle on the whole enjoyed life together, else they would not have chaffed one another so heartily."

Carlyle made a point of not unfrequently paying his respects to my mother, who he knew could not go to see him; and the last time he called my nephew, "golden-haired Ally," was brought in to the great man. Carlyle put his hands on the little fellow's head and said solemnly, "Fair fall thee, little man, in this world, and the next." Upon which my father said to me: "Carlyle is the most reverent and most irreverent man I know."

I subjoin some talks which my father had with Carlyle, jotted down in my note-book.

*A. T.* People say you are writing your autobiography.

*Carlyle.* Do they? Do they want me to make away with myself that they talk like that?

*A. T.* Why don't you try your hand at a great novel? you have seen life enough.

*Carlyle.* No, no. I write a novel! I know nothing of human character.

After going with my father to the British Museum and looking at the Greek and Roman statues, Carlyle said, "Neither man nor god can

get on without a decent jaw-bone, and not one of them has a decent jaw-bone."

Carlyle became in later years reconciled to my father's writing poetry. He admired "Harold," saying that it was "full of wild pathos," and founded on the Bayeux tapestry, which he called "a very blessed work indeed."

My father read him "The Revenge."

*Carlyle.* Eh ! Alfred, you have got the grip of it.

*A. T.* There's a man for you. The Spaniards declared he would "carouse" three or four glasses of wine and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them to pieces and swallow them down.

*Carlyle.* (Half to himself.) I knew that Alfred would treat that episode in a masterful manner, and he'd not allude to Elizabeth's starving the poor sailors.

And then he spoke of "The May Queen." "Oh ! but that's tender and true ; my niece says it sometimes to me !"

Through "The First Quarrel" he gave little cries of sympathy.

*Carlyle.* Ah, but that's a dreary tragic tale.

*A. T.* That's a true tale. My doctor in the Isle of Wight told it me.

*Carlyle, going on about the poem.* Ech ! poor fellow, he was just an honest plain man, and she was a curious production of the century, and I'm very sorry for that poor girl too.

One day Carlyle was full of Holman Hunt's "Shadow of the Cross."

*Carlyle.* I think, poor fellow, he painted that picture in a distraction.

*A. T.* The Christ I call Christ-like is Sebastian del Piombo's in the National Gallery.<sup>1</sup>

Then they talked of Goldsmith and Goethe.

*Carlyle.* Goldie was just an Irish blackguard, with a fine brain and sun-like eyes, and a great fund of goosery.

*A. T.* And of tender-heartedness : I love Goldie.

He made Carlyle laugh by giving a humorous imitation of Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith talking together.

*Carlyle.* Goldsmith was much read in Germany in Goethe's time.

*A. T.* You know we visited Goethe's house at Weimar. The "Salve" on the door-mat, and the legion of Goethe's old boots there looked to me terribly pathetic.

Then my father told how we had found a book "From T. Carlyle" on his table, which pleased the old man mightily.

They made merry over the statues of Goethe and Schiller in the market-place, "for all the world like drunken sailors quarrelling over a wreath."

*Carlyle.* Ay, ay. Art is at a low ebb ; and

<sup>1</sup> My father also had a high admiration of Leonardo da Vinci's sketch of the head of Christ in the Brera at Milan.

among the nations England, unless she takes great heed, will go down to the devil.

*A. T.* Come! we are not so bad as in Charles II.'s reign.

*Carlyle.* O yes, there were more Andrew Marvells then. True, the Parliament was so coxcombed at having cut a king's head off that there was no doing anything with them. Those days indeed were very like the days now, no real strong ruler, all just a confusion of jackassery.

He called Gladstone "The man with the immeasurable power of vocables."

*A. T.* I love the man, but no Prime Minister ought to be an orator.

They touched on Macaulay.

*A. T.* Macaulay, Guizot, Hallam and I went over the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Hall together; Macaulay said to me on going away, "I am delighted to have met you, Mr. Tennyson"; but I never saw him afterwards.

*Carlyle.* Eh (looking at him grimly), Alfred, Macaulay was afraid of you, you are such a black man (with a tremendous guffaw).

The last time we saw Carlyle he was in his dressing-gown, reading Masson's *Milton*.

*A. T.* Milton is a grand old fellow.

*Carlyle.* Yes, yes, and this man Masson is the first man who has properly sorted the Mosaic cosmogony, and I can now tell which way Satan went; but Masson has hung on his Milton peg *all* the politics, which Milton, poor fellow,

had never much to do with except to print a pamphlet or two.

They then talked about death.

*A. T.* In my old age I should like to get away from all this tumult and turmoil of civilization and live on the top of a tropical mountain ! I should at least like to see the splendours of the Brazilian forests before I die.

*Carlyle.* I would also like to quit it all.

*A. T.* If I were a young man, I would head a colony out somewhere or other.

*Carlyle.* O, ay, so would I, to India or somewhere : but the scraggiest bit of heath in Scotland is more to me than all the forests of Brazil. I am just twinkling away, and I wish I had had my Dimittis long ago.

Carlyle gave my father his tobacco box as a pledge of eternal brotherhood, and at the bottom of this I found a letter from Carlyle introducing Mrs. Oliphant.

Mrs. Oliphant, whom this note accompanies, is an old and esteemed friend in this house ; distinguished in literature, *Life of Edward Irving*, etc., and what is best of all, a highly amiable, rational and worthy lady.

Yours ever truly, T. CARLYLE.

## CHAPTER XI

DEATH OF CHARLES (TENNYSON) TURNER.  
"THE FALCON." VENICE.

1879-80

IN the Spring of 1879 a great sorrow came upon my parents. My father's favourite brother Charles (Tennyson) Turner died at Cheltenham on April 25th, and on May 20th his wife, my mother's sister, followed him. His sonnets, "Letty's Globe," "Time and Twilight," "On seeing a child blush on his first view of a corpse," "The Buoy Bell," "The Schoolboy's Dream," "On shooting a swallow in early youth," had in my father's judgment all the tenderness of the Greek epigram, and he ranked sonnets such as "Time and Twilight," and "The Holy Emerald," among the noblest in the language.

My uncle with his aquiline nose, dark eyes and black hair was very like my father, and Thackeray seeing him in middle life called him a "Velasquez tout craché." As Vicar of Grasby



he was known as the bountiful and loving father of his flock, his wife being in all things his devoted helpmate. We often spent part of the summer with them in their Vicarage. At their own expense they had built this and the church and the schools. Both had great delight in a simple country life, and my uncle had especial pleasure in his garden, his dogs, and his horses. These last he would train to obey his voice rather than whip or rein. No one who reads his poems can fail to see the "alma beata e bella" breathing through them. My father's "At Midnight, June 30th, 1879," was written as a preface to the *Collected Sonnets*, published in 1880.

Mr. Gladstone wrote a pleasant letter about the volume, and my father answered, with an allusion to the elegy by Catullus on his brother :

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

I am, as you will believe, very glad to have your appreciative estimate of my brother's sonnets. I wish indeed that you had known him : he was almost the most loveable human being I have ever met. I am glad too that you are touched by my little prefatory poem, so far as to honour it by a comparison with those lovely lines "Multas per terras et multa per æquora vectus," of which, as you truly say, neither I nor any other "can surpass the beauty" :

## 1879 LETTER FROM FITZGERALD

nor can any modern elegy, so long as men retain the least hope in the after-life of those whom they loved, equal in pathos the desolation of that everlasting farewell, "Atque in perpetuum frater ave atque vale." It would be pleasant to talk to you on these things instead of writing, but I fear that I cannot accept your kind invitation to Hawarden this year.

Ever, my dear Gladstone, yours,

A. TENNYSON.

In May my father published in a revised form a poem written when he was seventeen, "The Lover's Tale." The publication was forced upon him, as it was being extensively pirated. He had already in 1875 suppressed an edition brought out by Mr. Herne Shepherd, paying the costs of the decree of the Court of Chancery, since he heard that Mr. Shepherd was very poor and that his aged mother depended on him for her livelihood.

In June FitzGerald wrote :

LITTLE GRANGE, WOODBRIDGE,  
*June, 1879.*

MY DEAR ALFRED,

I do not write to you now, because when I have done so lately, Mrs. Tennyson has taken the trouble to answer me, which I did not wish her to have the trouble of doing.

Spedding tells me he has been on a visit to Farringford to arrange with you about an edition of your brother Charles' sonnets. Six months ago did I beg Spedding to make them more known to the world by some review, which he was the one man to do; and now he is going to do something of the kind, for a better, if sadder, reason than any request of mine. I believe that these sonnets, along with your own poems, are the *only* poetry of our times destined to survive: I could wish some of the sonnets omitted; but *that* I suppose even *you* must not do.

Then I have to thank you for your last, of some lines of which I have an echo in my head from some 50 years ago. Was not the original name *Cadrilla*,<sup>1</sup> which I thought too remindful of Paine's first set (of quadrilles), which you used to talk about and in which I believe you greatly excelled?

Now, in my turn, I shall send you my Readings (not Recitations) in old Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*: which you will just look into. Had I published, I should have used your authority, though not your name, for advising the world to read a little of the old chap, now buried, but "post tres dies" to rise again, if the critics and creators of two generations ago were not mistaken. So I should have quoted one of our time (A. T.) saying to me "Crabbe has a world of his own," which I suppose means originally the poems will live, as your brother's will, when others lie past howling. Well: had I thought proper to *name* you, I might have published: for then I should have succeeded in getting two or three hundred people perhaps to try a taste of my old boy before his regular turn comes; but no one would be tempted by my solitary recommenda-

<sup>1</sup> Instead of "Camilla" in "The Lover's Tale."

tion ; a critic or two might quash me and mine—so “enfin” I keep the book for my friends ; some of whom may think that, as my old Montaigne says, “Tout abrégé d’un bon livre est sot abrégé.” When you get the book you had better say nothing to me about it ; which I do think is the best to be agreed on beforehand by friends in such cases, give or take.

Think of old Carlyle (who has been but weakly this winter) reading right through Shakespeare during the Spring months ! So his niece writes me. I do not hear of his doing the same by his Goethe. I lately made another shot at *Faust* in B. Taylor’s translation, but I am as deaf to the charmer as ever. I really do suppose it is my obtuseness, as so many great people believe in him.

Are you ever coming this way again ? It was very good of you to think of me in your travel three years ago. Three years ! A consideration ; when one has left 70 behind one. I only wonder to find myself alive after this most mortal winter.

Farewell : do *not* let Mrs. Tennyson write in reply. I take for granted from Spedding’s letter that all is well with you all, and do you believe that I am always your ancient

E. F. G.

Mrs. Greville also wrote about Carlyle :

MILFORD, *June*, 1879.

Let me hear your plans. I will not ask Carlyle till I can make sure of finding you all at Aldworth. I cannot tell you how enormously curious and interesting it is to listen to Carlyle. His hands shake with a sort of palsy so that his meat must be cut for him : he feels this with painful acuteness. This is the only sign of

age. He can walk any distance. He surprised me by putting Browning next Alfred Tennyson. He has the tenderest contempt for the fellow-creatures he despises, and mixes up in his conversation the dead, the living, and characters in fiction with the greatest method. He said, "Alfred always from the beginning took a grip at the right side of every question." He cares for goodness more than genius, and the *truth* of "The Grandmother" *quite* upset him—he kept saying, "Poor old body, poor old body. And Alfred wrote that : well, I didn't know it."

SABINE GREVILLE.

Mr. Fields the American publisher paid us a visit this spring at Farringford. In a lecture, delivered afterwards, Fields said that in passing through the park by moonlight with my father, the poet suddenly fell on his knees and said, "Violets, man, violets ! smell them and you'll sleep the better."

His keen sense of smell may well have discovered the flowers in the night, but he writes to a poet who had indited a sonnet on the incident : "What Mr. Fields has said about the violets is *doubtless* authentic, still [the fact] has altogether faded out of *my* memory, but I shall not easily forget your graceful sonnet for which I pray you to accept my best thanks."

On Sept. 29th he wrote to a sculptor who wished to make a bust of him : "I thank you for the photograph of Longfellow's bust, but having had my own executed by Woolner some

years ago,<sup>1</sup> I then made up my mind not to sit again to any sculptor however excellent in his art."

In December Mr. and Mrs. Kendal produced "The Falcon" at the St. James' Theatre, and it had a run of sixty-seven nights. Fanny Kemble saw the piece, and her criticism was that it was an exquisite little poem in action, like one of Alfred de Musset's, such as *Les Caprices de Marianne*. "Mrs. Kendal," my father said, "looked magnificent, and Kendal spoke his lines well."

In February 1880 my father sent two child-songs, "The City Child" and "Minnie and Winnie" (set to music by my mother), to *St. Nicholas' Magazine*.

It was in the following month that the students of Glasgow University endeavoured to obtain my father's consent to his nomination for the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow. He had understood that the invitation had come from the whole body of students irrespective of political party, and accepted, on condition that this was the case. The manifesto of the Glasgow University Independent Club recognized his condition.

He found however that he had been put forward as a nominee of the Conservative party and at once withdrew.

<sup>1</sup> He alluded to the bust by Woolner made in 1857, which he much preferred to Woolner's later bust.

*To Matthew Fraser*

*May 6th, 1880.*

DEAR SIR,

I only consented to stand for your Lord Rectorship when informed by the letter of introduction which your agreeable deputation brought, that my nomination was "supported by a large majority, if not the totality, of the students of Glasgow." It now seems necessary that I should, by standing at your invitation, appear what I have steadfastly refused to be—a party candidate for the Conservative Club. The mere fact of a contest between the supporters of a nominee for a Liberal and of that for a Conservative Club leads, I suppose, inevitably to this conclusion in the minds of the public, and therefore I must beg to decline the honour of your candidature.

You are probably aware that some years ago the Glasgow Liberals asked me to be their candidate, and that I in like manner declined. Yet I would gladly accept a nomination, after what has occurred, if at any time a body of students, bearing no political name, should wish to nominate me, or if both Liberals and Conservatives should ever happen to agree in foregoing the excitement of a political contest, and in desiring a Lord Rector who would not appear for installation, and who would in fact be a mere *roi fainéant* with nothing but the literary merits you are good enough to appreciate.

## LETTER FROM FROUDE

I thank you for all the trouble you have taken, and I am, with best wishes for the prosperity of your University,

Yours faithfully, A. TENNYSON.

I now received the following letter from Froude :

5 ONSLOW GARDENS, S.W.

*June 7th, 1880.*

MY DEAR MR. TENNYSON,

I am sorry that I shall lose the pleasure of paying you a visit but I am far more sorry for the reason. Your father has two existences. Spiritually he lives in all our minds (in mine he has lived for nearly forty years) in forms imperishable as diamonds which time and change have no power over. The mortal case of him is of frailer material, and, as I believe he takes extremely little care of it himself, the charge falls on you, and the world will expect an account of it at your hands. Centuries will pass before we have another real full-grown poet. The seeds of time I suppose are sown and grow for a bit, and the reviews clap their hands. But they come to nothing. The moral atmosphere is too pestilential. The force which there is in the world is all destructive and disintegrating, and heaven knows when any organizing life will show itself again.

We must keep what we have got to the latest moment and be thankful for him.

Serus in cœlum redeat.

"Cœlum" can do without your father better than we can.

Faithfully yours, J. A. FROUDE.



After my uncle Charles' death my father was very unwell, suffering from a liver attack, and hearing perpetual ghostly voices.

Sir Andrew Clark ordered him either to America or to Venice. We applied for berths in the next liner to Canada but found that all the best had been taken, so we determined to go to Venice, and the journey did in effect restore his health and silence the ghosts.

*June 13th.* We were at Munich and saw the modern picture gallery, where my father liked Wilkie's "Reading of the last Will," and a shipwreck off the coast of Essex, lit up by a weird light "like one of Danby's pictures."

In the evening we went to the Countess d'Alberg's (Lord Acton's mother-in-law) and met Dr. Döllinger. He had a fine earnest countenance and my father was delighted with him. He told my father that since his youth a great change had come over Germany. Now, Germany was full of materialistic unbelief, whereas England, he thought, had "much of the true, broad and liberal faith, a faith which developes and grows more real as the centuries advance."

Next day we visited the Pinakothek. My father admired a picture of a sunny young man, with his hands crossed, by Rembrandt, also a Virgin by Titian, who, he said, "looked out on the world with a sad commanding eye." Charles V. with his projecting jaw and

large massive hands struck him "as a truthful portrait."

From Munich we journeyed into a Bavarian valley where

The mountain breaks,  
And seems with its accumulated crags  
To overhang the world ;

and thence to Tegernsee to Lord Acton's, the most hospitable of houses. From Tegernsee we went to Innsbrück. There Professor Bickel called upon us from the University, full of having discovered a metre in the Hebrew of the Psalms.

We left Innsbrück for Landro (the Dolomites). The reflection of Monte Cristallo in the green lake, and the drive to Cortina my father thought remarkable. Innumerable ragged peaks rose about one, as he said "like ghosts of Chimborazo." The mountain meadows were gay with forget-me-nots, blue gentians and pink daphnes, glorifying the upland slopes.

We asked a young maiden on the way whether she was not happy in this beautiful land. She answered, "I have been three summers in Cortina and my heart is always laughing like the summer." My father admired the great lonely mountain throne of Antelao with its sloping canopy of ridged snow, which rises in a grand sweep from the valley of Cortina. Next day we drove through a tract of firs, past the

Antelao to Pieve di Cadore, the birthplace of Titian. The entrance of the valley looked sublime, and we seemed to recognize many backgrounds of Titian's pictures in the different valleys. We passed one lake, the Lago Morte, which my father said was like the lake from which "The Lady of the Lake rose": and pushed on to Venice, which we reached in a great thunderstorm. The best picture in Venice, he thought with Burne-Jones, is Venice itself as one glides in a gondola along the Grand Canal: but, having dreamt all his life of this city on the sea, he was disappointed with the side canals. The pictures themselves in the churches were generally in such dim light that he could scarcely see them, but the "Presentation of the Virgin" in the Church of the Madonna dell' Orto he particularly praised.

The Tintoretts struck him as most original, dramatic, and noble in their treatment of subjects which had been often painted before. He stood long before a beautiful Bellini in the Church of Il Redentore.

He was fascinated by St. Mark's, by the Doge's Palace and the Piazza, and by the blaze of colour in water and sky. We climbed the Campanile: thence we walked to the Library, where he could scarcely tear himself away from the Grimani Breviary.

"In gondolas by day and night" he quoted "Julian and Maddalo," and went out to see the

sunsets, and wished to wander by himself on the Lido, but liked most of all the burial-ground of the Jews, overgrown with poppies and thistles, a pathetic place. At the Armenian monastery the pomegranates were in flower, and a fat little Armenian monk brought him a book to sign, whereupon he wrote, to the monk's satisfaction :

With all good wishes  
And all good dishes

A. T.

In the Piazza San Marco we met the sculptor Story, and on my father talking of "the lin-lan-lone of evening bells," heard from him how wonderful the winter ringing in a wind of the ice-sheathed forests in North America is ; like the tinkle of innumerable bells all round, from far and near.

From Venice we went to Verona, and my father was enchanted by the romance of its situation, nestled among vine-clad hills, with the Adige rushing round the walls, and by the beautiful Giusti garden,—famous for its cypresses throughout two centuries,—that looks out toward the western hills.

From Verona we returned home by the Lago di Garda and Milan.

Over Sirmio, the peninsula of Catullus, we roamed all day. My father liked this, I think, the best of anything we had seen on our tour : its olives, its old ruins, and its green-sward

stretching down to the blue lake with the mountains beyond.

Here he made his “Frater Ave atque Vale.”

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione  
row !

So they row’d, and there we landed—O venusta  
Sirmio !

There to me thro’ all the groves of olive in the  
summer glow,

There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple  
flowers grow,

Came that “Ave atque Vale” of the poet’s hope-  
less woe,

Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred  
years ago,

“Frater Ave atque Vale”—as we wander’d to  
and fro

Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda lake  
below

Sweet Catullus’ all-but-island, olive-silvery  
Sirmio !

Miss Ritchie was staying at Farringford when we came back from our foreign travels. To her he dwelt with more pleasure on the row to Desenzano than on almost anything else, and on the associations of Sirmione with Catullus. The long July twilight had at last died away whilst he talked of all he had been seeing, and lights were brought, and I fetched him a volume of Catullus.

He made Miss Ritchie, who was no Latin scholar, follow the words as he read through some of his favourite poems. His finger moved from word to word, and he dwelt with intense satisfaction on the adequacy of the expression and of the sounds, on the mastery of the proper handling of quantity, and on the perfection of the art.

## CHAPTER XII

### BALLADS AND POEMS. MY FATHER'S NOTES. "THE CUP."

1880

THE volume of the ballads and poems, dedicated by my father to his grandson "Golden-hair'd Ally," was published in my father's 71st year in 1880, and contains some of his most vigorous and dramatic poems.

His manuscript notes on them are as follows :

"'The First Quarrel' was founded on an Isle of Wight story. Dr. Dabbs was the doctor. The poor woman quarrelled with her husband. He started the night of the quarrel for Jersey ; the boat, in which he was, struck a reef and went down."

"'Rizpah' is founded on an incident which I saw thus related in some penny magazine called *Old Brighton*, lent me by my friend and neighbour Mrs. Brotherton :<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "I told him the story one day at Farringford, knowing it would touch him, and he came up to see my husband and me next day, and

A conspicuous tombstone (at Brighton), to be read by every one passing through the churchyard, bears the following truly extraordinary inscription :

PHŒBE HESSEL

Who was born at Stepney, in the year 1713.  
 She served for many years as a Private Soldier in the  
 Fifth Regiment of Foot in different parts of Europe,  
 And in the year 1745 fought under the command of the  
 Duke of Cumberland, at the Battle of Fontenoy,  
 Where she received a Bayonet Wound in her Arm.  
 Her long life, which commenced in the Reign of  
 Queen Anne, extended to that of King George IV.,  
 By whose munificence she received comfort and support  
 In her latter days. She died at Brighton,  
 Where she had long resided,  
 December 12th, 1821, aged 108.

“This epitaph gives the complete history of one of the most notable characters of Brighton, concerning whom it seems scarcely possible to say more than her tombstone records. For many years before her death, it should be mentioned that George IV. allowed her half-a-guinea a week. When the king saw her, and talked with her, he called her ‘A jolly old fellow,’ and offered her a guinea a week, which with a rare moderation she refused, saying,

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asked me to tell it him again : on which I gave him the little penny magazine I found it in. It was an unpretentious account of ‘Old Brighton.’ Many months after he took me up to his library, after a walk, and read me what he called ‘Bones.’ That was before it was called ‘Rizpah’ and published.”

MARY BROTHERTON.



‘Half that sum was enough to maintain her.’ She is well remembered in Brighton still, as she used to sit in the sun against a house on the lower part of the Marine Parade. Her life was indeed an extraordinary one. After the death of her second husband, William Hessel, by the assistance of some friends, she purchased a donkey, and travelled with fish and other commodities to the villages about Brighton.

“It was in one of these journeys that she obtained such information as led to the arrest and conviction of Rooke and Howell for robbing the mail, a circumstance which made a considerable sensation at the close of the last century. They were gibbeted on the spot where the robbery was committed, and there is an affecting story connected with the body of Rooke. When the elements had caused the clothes and flesh to decay, his aged mother, night after night, in all weathers, and the more tempestuous the weather the more frequent the visits, made a sacred pilgrimage to the lonely spot on the Downs, and it was noticed that on her return she always brought something away with her in her apron. Upon being watched it was discovered that the bones of the hanging man were the objects of her search, and as the wind and rain scattered them on the ground she conveyed them to her home. There she kept them, and, when the gibbet was stripped of its horrid burden, in the dead silence of the night she interred them

in the hallowed enclosure of Old Shoreham Churchyard. What a sad story of a Brighton Rizpah!"

"‘The Northern Cobbler,’" wrote my father, "is founded on a fact that I heard in early youth. A man set up a bottle of gin in his window when he gave up drinking, in order to defy the drink."

"The story of ‘The Revenge,’" he wrote again, "is told finely by Sir Walter Raleigh and Froude, also by Bacon. Sir Richard Grenville commanded Sir Walter Raleigh's first colony which went out to Virginia." "‘This story of ‘The Revenge,’" says Froude, ‘struck a deeper terror, though it was but the action of a single ship, into the hearts of the Spanish people, it dealt a more deadly blow upon their fame and moral strength than the Armada itself.’"

"Sir Richard, after this desperate fight of his one ship against the Spanish fleet, ‘commanded the master gunner, whom he knew to be a most resolute man, to split and sink the ship, that thereby nothing might remain of glory or victory to the Spaniards, seeing in so many hours they were not able to take her, having had fifteen hours' time, fifteen thousand men, and fifty-three sail of men of war to perform it withal.’"

When Sir Richard is dying, he cries out in the poem :

“I have fought for Queen and Faith like a  
valiant man and true ;  
I have only done my duty as a man is bound  
to do :  
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville  
die !”  
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

“His exact words were :<sup>1</sup> ‘Here die I  
Richard Greenfield, with a joyful and quiet  
mind, for that I have ended my life as a true  
soldier ought to do, that have fought for his  
country, Queen, religion and honour. Whereby  
my soul most joyful departeth out of this body,  
and shall always leave behind it an everlasting  
fame of a valiant and true soldier that has done  
his duty as he was bound to do.’ When he  
had finished these or such other like words, he  
gave up the Ghost with a great and stout  
courage, and no man could perceive any true  
sign of heaviness in him.”

The germ of the poem of “The Revenge”  
was, as has been stated in the Journal, the one  
line

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville  
lay.

“The Sisters” was partly founded on the  
story, known to him, of a girl who consented  
to be bridesmaid to her sister, although she

<sup>1</sup> This is Linschooten’s account.

secretly loved the bridegroom. The night after the wedding the poor bridesmaid ran away from her home. They searched for her, high and low, and at last she was discovered knocking at the church door, in "the pitiless rush of autumn rain," her wits gone :

"The great Tragedian, that had quench'd herself  
In that assumption of the bridesmaid."

The simile taken from the lake at Llanberis was a personal experience. He always said that he remembered the lake as it looked in a flash of lightning, not as he saw it afterwards in the daytime.

The scene of the picnic in the wood was also a personal experience in the New Forest.

And these lines he would quote as his own belief :

My God, I would not live  
Save that I think this gross hard-seeming world  
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
Behind the world, that make our griefs our gains.

Among his Lincolnshire poems "The Village Wife" is the only one that is in any way a portrait. The rest of them are purely imaginative.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd 'em,  
belong'd to the Squire,  
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leaves i' the middle  
to kindle the fire.

This really happened to some of the most valuable books in the great library formed by Johnson's friend, Bennet Langton.

My father's note on "The Children's Hospital" is : "A true story told me by Mary Gladstone. The doctors and hospital are unknown to me. The two children are the only characters, in this little dramatic poem, taken from life."

Miss Gladstone's letter ran thus :

There was a little girl in the hospital, and as the doctor and nurse passed by her bed they stopped, for her eyes were shut and they thought she was asleep. "We must try that operation to-morrow," he said, "but I am afraid she will not get through it." I forget what the child said, until Annie the girl in the next bed suddenly suggested, "I know what I should do, I should ask Jesus to help me." "Yes, I will, but oh ! Annie, how will he know it's me, when there are such a lot of us in the ward?" "I'll tell you," said Annie, "put your arms outside the counterpane." The next morning the little girl's arms were outside the counterpane and her eyes were closed. She was dead.

About "The Defence of Lucknow" my father says : "The old flag, used during the defence of the Residency, was hoisted on the Lucknow flagstaff by General Wilson, and the soldiers who still survived from the siege were all mustered on parade in honour of this poem, when my son Lionel (who died on his journey from India) visited Lucknow. A tribute overwhelmingly touching."

"I took as subject of a poem," he goes on, "Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, because he is a fine historical figure. He was named by the people 'The good Lord Cobham,' a friend of Henry V. As follower of Wyclif, he was cited before a great council of the Church, which was presided over by Archbishop Arundel, and was condemned to be burnt alive for heresy."

"My poem of 'Columbus' was founded on the following passage in Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*":

The caravels set sail early in October, bearing off Columbus, shackled like the vilest of culprits, amid the scoffs and shouts of a miscreant rabble, who took a brutal joy in heaping insults on his venerable head, and sent curses after him from the island he had so recently added to the civilized world. The worthy Villejo, as well as Andreas Martin, the master of the caravel, felt deeply grieved at his situation. They would have taken off his irons, but to this he would not consent. "No," said he proudly, "Their Majesties commanded me by letter to submit to whatever Bobadillo should order in their name; by their authority he has put upon me these chains; I will wear them until they shall order them to be taken off, and I will afterwards preserve them, as relics and memorials of the reward of my services." "He did so," adds his son Fernando in his history; "I saw them always hanging in his cabinet, and he requested that when he died they might be buried with him."

It was written after repeated entreaties from certain prominent Americans that he would

commemorate the discovery of America in verse.

My father continues: "The oldest form of 'Maeldune' is in the *Book of the Dun Cow* (1160). I read the legend in Joyce's *Old Celtic Romances*, but most of the details are mine."

By this story he intended to represent in his own original way the Celtic genius, and he wrote the poem with a genuine love of the peculiar exuberance of the Irish imagination.

The blank-verse lyric of "The Battle of Brunanburh"<sup>1</sup> suggested to Edward FitzGerald that the choruses of Greek plays ought to be rendered in this fashion. My father himself liked the rush of the alliterative verse, as giving something of the old English war-song.

The struggle of standards,  
The rush of the javelins,  
The crash of the charges,  
The wielding of weapons—  
The play that they play'd with  
The children of Edward.

The few lines addressed to Dante have a curious history. In 1865 Lord Houghton met a brother of my father's friend Canon Warburton, and said to him, "Tennyson is not going to the Dante Centenary, but he has given me some lines which I am to recite to the Florentines," and he then repeated the lines. The same

<sup>1</sup> See vol. iv. p. 16.

evening Canon Warburton met his brother who observed, "Milnes has just been saying to me some lines which Tennyson has given him to recite at the Centenary, for he is not going himself." He then repeated the lines. Some fifteen years or so later, my father was talking to the Canon about the probably short-lived duration of all modern poetical fame. "Who," said he, "will read Alfred Tennyson one hundred years hence? And look at Dante after six hundred years!" "That," Warburton answered, "is a renewal of the garland-of-a-day superstition." "What do you mean?" "Your own words!" "What can you mean?" "Don't you remember those lines you gave to Milnes to recite for you at the Dante Centenary?" My father had quite forgotten the lines. Warburton then wrote out the lines as far as he could remember them, and shortly afterwards I sent a letter to the Canon, telling him that my father had recalled the correct version of the poem.

My father received many complimentary sonnets about this volume.

The following is the kind of brief acknowledgment which he sent.

Pray accept my best thanks for your energetic and too complimentary sonnet.

A. TENNYSON.

I thank you for your kind words. I rejoice



to hear that you are happy in the possession of those good gifts of which you speak.

As to the rest, the poet can scarcely be judged with fairness in one age or another. He must abide the judgment of the ages.

A. TENNYSON.

Late in 1880 my father had completed “The Cup,” begun after he had finished “The Falcon” in Nov. 1879.<sup>1</sup> This story from Plutarch first commended itself to him in a paragraph by Lecky in his *History of European Morals* :<sup>2</sup>

A powerful noble once solicited the hand of a Galatian lady named Camma, who, faithful to her husband, resisted all his entreaties. Resolved at any hazard to succeed, he caused her husband to be assassinated, and when she took refuge in the temple of Diana, and enrolled herself among the priestesses, he sent noble after noble to induce her to relent. After a time he ventured himself into her presence. She feigned a willingness to yield, but told him it was first necessary to make a libation to the goddess. She appeared as a priestess before the altar bearing in her hand a cup of wine, which she had poisoned. She drank half of it herself, handed the remainder to her guilty lover, and when he had drained the cup to the dregs, burst into a fierce thanksgiving that she had been permitted to avenge, and was soon to rejoin, her murdered husband. (Plutarch, *De Mulier. Virt.*)

Sir Charles Newton helped my father in the archæology of the period. He wrote :

<sup>1</sup> Both plays were published (Macmillan) 1884.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, vol. ii. p. 342 (ed. 1894).

March 6th, 1879.

I see no reason for doubting Plutarch's statement that Artemis was worshipped in Galatia, tho' it is not corroborated as yet by coins or inscriptions, and the particular Artemis so worshipped would most probably be closely allied in attributes to the Tauric Artemis, and would thus correspond with your conception of the Galatian Artemis (the goddess of Nature). The epithet *πατρῶος* in the *Amatorius* applied to the priesthood shows that the priesthood was hereditary. It may be inferred therefore that Camma was of noble birth. The story as told by Plutarch is most dramatic. If I find anything more you shall have it. In the meantime you may rely on my silence.

Mr. Knowles writes, Dec. 4th, 1880 :

Irving is in a great state of enthusiasm and excitement, and he is most anxious that you should read over the Play, not only to himself and Ellen Terry but to all the Company which is to enact it. This is a most admirable suggestion, and I hope extremely that you will see your way to say "yes" to it. He would like it to be on next Thursday week, the 25th inst., when Ellen Terry will be back in town and everything advanced enough to make such a reading of the greatest and most opportune value.

My father accepted the invitation, and happily but few alterations from the first manuscript copy were found necessary for the stage-edition. Three short speeches for Synorix were added, Act 1. Sc. 3 ; and at the end of Act II. the quarrel between Sinnatus and Synorix was lengthened by

two lines, and Camma was made to interrogate Sinnatus as to what Synorix had said, and three or four entrances were made less abrupt. Irving inserted most of the stage-directions, and devised the magnificent scenery,<sup>1</sup> and the drama was produced by him with signal success at the Lyceum, and played to crowded houses. He wrote to my father, “I hope that the splendid success of your grand Tragedy will be followed by other triumphs equally great.”<sup>2</sup>

Ellen Terry, who played the noble part of “Camma” magnificently, thanked him for his “great little play.”

Browning was loud in praise of “The Cup”;<sup>3</sup> and my father wrote to him :

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER,  
*Feb. 8th, 1880.*

MY DEAR BROWNING,

That you, whom Professor Morley calls a born dramatist, should approve of my little play, is good news to me and mine. I hope to see you soon. \* \* \* \* We three greet you lovingly, and are all yours.

A. TENNYSON.

<sup>1</sup> I understand from Mr. Knowles that he helped Irving to design the Temple scene.

<sup>2</sup> My father said, “Irving has not hit off my Synorix, who is a subtle blend of Roman refinement and intellectuality, and barbarian, self-satisfied sensuality.”

<sup>3</sup> “The Cup” was produced January 3rd, 1881; and ran for over one hundred and thirty nights.

Of our Aldworth life in 1880 and of my father's talk about "Becket" and "The Cup" William Allingham gives a pleasant account in his private diary.

Haslemere. *Thursday, Aug. 5th, 1880.* Very fine. Helen and I started about 3.30 to walk to Tennyson's as invited. In the shady lane the carriage overtook us. Tennyson had kindly called for us. He was in the carriage, with his little grandson, Alfred, on his nurse's lap, and Mr. Fields, an American guest. Little Alfred, aged 2, had on the great Alfred's black sombrero, and the child's straw hat with a blue ribbon was stuck on the top of the poet's huge head, and so they drove gravely along. I followed on foot along the heath-fringed road on Blackdown, overlooking the vast expanses of light and shadow, golden cornfields, blue distances from Leith Hill to Chanctonbury Ring. Walked through the house, long hall open at each end, and found tea on the further lawn, smooth, shut in with shrubs. The view of the lower windows of the house is now shut up by the growth of twigs and leaves. On the lawn, Mrs. Tennyson lying horizontal in an invalid chair with a hood to it, wrapt in furs, and looking sadly pale and worn. Mrs. Hodgson (of Lythe Hill) and sister, visitors. Mr. and Mrs. Fields of Philadelphia (from Egypt and Spain) two days' guests, Hallam, alert and friendly, Alfred Tennyson in sombrero, a gray suit, broad-shouldered, somewhat stooping, looking peaceful and contented. He has been at Venice, Cadore, etc. with Hallam.

I told him Dr. Martineau, who is 75, had just climbed a mountain in Strathspey 4000 ft. high.

T. When I was 67 I climbed a mountain 7000 ft.

high ; the guide said he never saw a man of my age *si léger*.

We spoke of the stage. "Irving won't answer letters." Perhaps the only way, I suggest, to have any peace.

T. I often think I ought to have gone on the same plan. (But in fact Mrs. Tennyson has done nearly all the answering.) I gave Irving my "Thomas à Becket" : he said it was magnificent, but it would cost him £3000 to mount it. he couldn't afford the risk. If well put on the stage it would act for a time, and it would bring me credit (he said), but it wouldn't pay. He said, "If you give me something short I'll do it." So I wrote him a play in two acts "The Cup." The success of a piece doesn't depend on its literary merit or even on its stage effect, but on its *hitting* somehow. Miss Terry said, "We act mechanically after a long run, but on a first night nobody suspects how we have our hearts in our mouths."

Tennyson did not much approve Irving's "Shylock," "He made you pity Shylock too much."

T. I told Miss Terry she ought, as advocate, to stand on the steps to gain advantage, instead of standing on the level, a little female thing, and looking up at him. The worst of writing for the stage is, you must keep some actor always in your mind.

As we went to another part of the grounds he recalled the direction in *Sakontala*, "You will go straight on till you come to a Brahmin buried to his middle in a pit full of termite ants and then turn to the left." He said the story of the Mayor of Galway, who for the sake of justice condemned his own son to death, and then hanged him, was fine, would make a tragedy.

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(P. 45.) *My father's talk on Milton's "Paradise Lost"*  
*to me when a boy at Marlborough*

Bk. I. 60. "Our English language alters quickly. This great line would be almost commonplace now :

The dismal situation waste and wild."

Bk. I. 211. "I hope most of us have a higher idea in these modern times of the Almighty than this :

The will  
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven  
Left him at large to his own dark designs,  
That with reiterated crimes he might  
Heap on himself damnation."

Bk. I. 725. "I always like this, it is mystical :

From the arched roof  
*Pendent by subtle magic*, many a row  
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets."

Bk. II. 430. "Note the great pauses in Satan's speech."

"I think that Milton's vague hell is much more awful than Dante's hell marked off into divisions."

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Bk. II. 634. "What simile was ever so vast as this?

Then soars  
*Up to the fiery concave towering high.*  
As when far off at sea a fleet descried  
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds  
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles  
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring  
Their spicy drugs; they, on the trading flood,  
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,  
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seem'd  
Far off the flying fiend.

Then the next passage, the picture of sin that seems to be alluring at first, hideous afterwards, is fine."

Bk. II. 879. "A good instance of onomatopœia:

On a sudden open fly  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound  
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
Of Erebus."

Bk. IV. 127. When Uriel saw Satan—

"This shows a fine dramatic feeling in Milton,—

Disfigured, more than could befall  
Spirit of happy sort; his gestures fierce  
He mark'd, and mad demeanour, then alone,  
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen."

"A few lines below—'Sylvan scene' and the gentle gales 'fanning their odoriferous wings' are undoubtedly commonplace now, but Milton introduced the style."

"I hate the lines about 'the spouse of Tobit's son.' They are objectionable. I do not object to the thief simile as some do."

"*Blooming* ambrosial fruit." "'Blooming' is bold." In the description of the garden he quoted "flowers worthy of Paradise" down to "without thorn the rose."

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Bk. iv. 242. "‘Where the unpiercèd shade’ is the right reading not ‘the unpierc’d shade,’ in those beautiful lines about the flowers which

Nature boon  
Pour’d forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,  
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote  
The open field, and where the unpiercèd shade  
Imbrown’d the noontide bowers."

Bk. iv. 248. "What liquid lines these too—

Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,  
or                      And sweet reluctant amorous delay,  
or Bk. iv. 354,                      And in the ascending scale  
Of Heaven, the stars that usher evening rose."

"This last line is lovely because it is full of vowels, which are all different. It is even a more beautiful line than those where the repetition of the same vowels or of the same consonants sometimes is so melodious."

Bk. iv. 810. "That is a wonderful simile—

Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear  
Touch’d lightly, for no falsehood can endure  
Touch of celestial temper, but returns  
Of force to its own likeness ; up he starts  
Discover’d and surpris’d. As when a spark  
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder, laid  
Fit for the tun, some magazine to store  
Against a rumour’d war, the smutty grain,  
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air ;  
So started up in his own shape the fiend."

Bk. v. 277. "A seraph winged" to "colours dipt in Heaven" he would quote with admiration.

Bk. v. 336-396. And my father would humorously quote of the French cooks abroad—

"Taste after taste upheld with kindest change—

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*                      \*

No fear lest dinner cool."



## APPENDIX

Adding, "That is a terrible bathos after the beautiful imagery, but shows Milton's simplicity."

Bk. v. 525. My father said: "Certainly Milton's physics and metaphysics are not strong—though I fully agree with

To persevere  
He left it in thy power ; ordain'd thy will,  
By nature free, not over-ruled by fate  
Inextricable, or strict necessity.  
Our voluntary service he requires,  
Not our necessitated ; such with him  
Finds no acceptance, nor can find ; for how  
Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve  
Willing or no, who will but what they must  
By destiny, and can no other choose ? "

My father liked the gathering of the host "by imperial summons called," and the "mystical dance" which the mystical dance of the "starry sphere of planets resembles nearest." The angels' feast he called "delicious," and said "Old Milton the puritan must have been a bit of a sensualist in his nature."

Bk. v. 745. Of the coming of Satan with his host

Innumerable as the stars of night,  
Or stars of morning, dewdrops, which the sun  
Impearls on every leaf and every flower—

and Satan mounting his royal seat, my father said, "What an imagination the old man had ! Milton beats every one in the material sublime."

Bk. v. 791. "Milton could not help adding his political comment

If not equal all, yet free,  
Equally free ; for orders and degrees  
Jar not with liberty, but well consist."

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Bk. v. 896. My father quoted the famous lines about Abdiel as very fine—

Among the faithless, faithful only he ;  
Among innumerable false, unmoved,  
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,  
. . . From amidst them forth he passed  
Long way through hostile scorn.

Bk. vi. 372. "Milton's proper names are often chosen for their full sounds,

Ariel and Arioch and the violence  
Of Ramiel."

Bk. vi. 768. "The following is what made Wordsworth admire Milton's imagination—

(*The Messiah*)

He onward came ; *far off his coming shone*.  
. . . Under his burning wheels  
The steadfast empyrean shook throughout  
All but the throne itself of God.

What a grand pause in the blank verse after 'God' !"  
And "This is a rushing line that describes the lightning course of his wrath—

Eternal wrath  
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit."

Bk. vii. 23-26. "A beautiful beginning—

Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,  
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged  
To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,  
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues."

## APPENDIX

Bk. VII. 216. "This is a magnificent line,

Silence, ye troubled waves, *and thou, deep, peace!*

How much finer than 'and, billows, peace,' the proper scansion, this break is, and the alliteration how subtle, 'and thou, deep, peace' !"

"Full of notable lines, *e.g.* 298 :

Wave rolling after wave, where way they found—  
If steep, with torrent rapture ; if through plain,  
Soft-ebbing . . .  
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flower'd,  
Opening their various colours, and made gay  
Her bosom, smelling sweet . . ."

Bk. VII. 431.

The air  
Floats, as they pass, fann'd with unnumber'd plumes ;  
From branch to branch the smaller birds with song  
Solaced the woods.

Then my father would quote the pictures of the nightingale, the swan and the peacock as beautiful.

"How much finer than Thomson's lines are those on the peacock ! They are as fine as can be—

The crested cock, whose clarion sounds  
The silent hours, and the other whose gay train  
Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue  
Of rainbows and starry eyes."

Bk. VIII. The first three lines of this book are "beautifully expressed—

The angel ended, and in Adam's ear  
So charming left his voice, that he awhile  
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear."

Bk. IX. 568. "Satan begins well too—

Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve."

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Bk. x. 412. "This seems to be rather poor however—

The blasted stars looked wan, etc."

Bk. xi. 491. "I hate inversions, but this line (after the many mighty lines about the many ways that lead to death's 'grim cave') is strong in its inversion—

And over them triumphant Death his dart  
Shook."

Bk. xi. 553. And my father often quoted

"Nor love thy life, nor hate ; but what thou livest  
Live well."

---

(P. 109.) *The following is an abridgement of the account of Freshwater society, written by Miss Weld, and published in "Lord Tennyson," by H. J. Jennings :*

"I must ask you to transport yourself back ten summers, and to picture to your mind's eye the figure of Tennyson emerging from the little green postern leading to the Down Lane. Bearing to the left, he lingers awhile at the first gate, to admire the beautiful view which, with its sea of Mediterranean blue and its foreground of pines, he compares to the Riviera ; but not again does he slacken the rapid pace, habitual to him, till he has turned towards Freshwater Bay, and reached a house embosomed in ivy and garlanded to the very roof with roses in full bloom. He looks up to the window from which smiling faces are nodding to him, but ere his foot can cross the threshold the genial hostess of Dimbola has come out into her garden to meet and greet her honoured guest ; and by the way in which they plunge forthwith into earnest converse, you can see what a true communion of spirit exists between them on most subjects, though, to her great regret, she cannot get Tennyson's full sympathy for the pursuit she at present finds so engrossing, and he cannot see why, because she has devoted

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herself to photography, he should be called upon to victimize himself by becoming her sitter so often. In vain does the lady of the camera lay before the poet the muster-roll of his illustrious fellow-victims who have already sat to her,<sup>1</sup> and urge how successful his friends thought her last study of him, and that the state of the atmosphere is even more favourable to photography to-day than it was when that study was taken. Mrs. Julia Margaret Cameron will not win her cause this time, her persuasions being suddenly cut short by the entrance of two gentlemen and a lady. The elder of the former at once arrests your attention by his patriarchal mien, as he stands erect, leaning on his staff, his ample white beard and snowy locks flowing down over a blue caftan, suggestive of the Eastern land so long his home. For this is Mr. C. H. Cameron, the husband of our hostess and a member of the Indian Council, who was for many years resident in Calcutta, where he and his wife were most highly esteemed by Lord Hardinge (after whom they have called one of their sons, who is now in the Ceylon Civil Service). Mr. Cameron is a first-rate classic, and he and the Laureate engage in an animated discussion about the respective merits of certain great Greek and Latin writers, and the peculiarities of their several styles, whilst Mrs. Cameron turns to inquire of the younger gentleman how it fares with the poor of Freshwater. None can better answer her question, for he to whom it is addressed is Horatio Tennyson, seventh brother of the poet, now resident at the Terrace, close to Mrs. Cameron, who is devoting his life to ministering amongst those 'who are any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate,' winning the wanderers back into the fold by showing them he still counts them his brethren in Christ.

After the bodily presence of Mrs. Cameron was taken from us, her spirit seemed to linger on in the person of a sister, who had come to Freshwater in order to be near her. This was Mrs. Prinsep, the wife of Mr. Thoby Prinsep, the well-known

<sup>1</sup> A muster-roll not then complete, but afterwards embracing, among many other names, those of Browning, Carlyle, Darwin, Herschel, Herr Joachim, Jowett, Lecky, Sir Henry Taylor, Aubrey de Vere, Watts, the Emperor Frederick of Germany, etc. When the last-named was sitting to her, she was so taken up with the desire of getting a satisfactory likeness, that, to make him open his eyes wider, she shouted out to him, "Big eyes! big eyes!" quite oblivious, at the moment, of his rank.

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East India Director. To their house, 'The Briary,' the Laureate (together with his eldest son, who, after leaving college, became his father's inseparable companion) was an almost daily visitor, and many were the hours spent by him in congenial conversation, on politics, literature, or science, with the master-mind that had long had so potent a share in the government of India, and whose ready grasp of almost every imaginable subject was only less wonderful than his marvellous memory. His keen interest in contemporary politics was unimpaired by the fact that his loss of eyesight compelled him to depend on others for his knowledge of passing events. Tennyson took delight in reading aloud to him the interesting letters which every mail brought him from his artist-son, Mr. Val Prinsep, whilst the latter was engaged on his large painting of the 'Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India,' (which letters have since been published, almost without alteration, under the title of 'Imperial India').

With the Prinseps lived, for part of the year, the artist from whom their son Val had first learnt to handle the brush—Mr Watts, the Royal Academician; and many a pleasant talk about art have the poet and the painter had together in the large studio at the Briary, on whose walls the colossal study of the 'Drayman and his Horses' used to hang. Many more of his pictures adorned the living-rooms, which were artistically furnished with costly objects from the East—so arranged that comfort was never sacrificed to appearance, but everything was made to minister to that hospitality of which the host and the hostess were the very soul. Amongst those who were the most frequently to be met here were Mrs. Hughes and her children and grandchildren. Mrs. Nassau Senior, so well known for her philanthropic labours, long shared her mother's Freshwater home; but after her death, this noble-hearted mother undertook the long voyage to Tennessee, in order to take her granddaughter out to her father, who was in charge of the colony of Rugby, founded by his brother, Mr. Tom Hughes. Greatly to the regret of Tennyson and of all her Freshwater friends, she has never returned to the Isle of Wight, but continues to reside in the colony, respected and beloved by all as their common mother.

Tennyson has an intense dislike to dining out; his habit

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being to retire soon after dinner to his study, and there to spend the evening in solitude with his books, unless he is tempted by the bright starlight to climb up to the flat roof of his house, to carry on his favourite pursuit of astronomy. I well remember one particular night on which there was a total eclipse of the moon, when he was so much struck by the number of constellations rendered visible to the naked eye through the veiling of the moon's light, that he insisted on his youngest son (Lionel) being got out of bed to look at the sight."

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### (P. 275.) *The Franklin Epitaph in Greek and Latin*

My father wrote to my brother and myself, enclosing a letter from Mr. Gladstone :

Nov. 19th, 1875.

MY DEAR BOYS,

Gladstone and others have been amusing themselves translating into Greek and Latin my "Epitaph on Franklin." He wants to make a little book of it in various languages like that of the *Lady of the Tree*, which you may remember Montagu Butler gave me. Lord Lyttelton's is, I think, the best translation (of those he has sent):

οἴχεται· ἐν Βορέου νιφόεσσais ὁστέα κείται  
ἀκταῖς· ναυτιλίαν Σὺ δὲ ναυτίλλει μέγ' ἀμείνω,  
"Ἡρώος ψυχῇ, πόλον ἄμβροτον εἰσοιχνοῦσαν.

Would Macaulay, Butcher or any among you like to try your hand on it?

A. T.

I have added the original lest you should have forgotten it.

Not here ! the white North has thy bones ; and thou,  
Heroic sailor-soul,  
Art passing on thine happier voyage now  
Toward no earthly pole.

## APPENDIX

*From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone (about translations  
of my father's epitaph on Sir John Franklin)*

HAWARDEN CASTLE, CHESTER,

Nov. 16th, 1875.

MY DEAR TENNYSON,

Can you by chance, and will you by kindness, give me the name and whereabouts of a gentleman who is now preparing a work on Sir John Franklin? I have unhappily mislaid his letter.

The letter touched you and you may have been made aware of its purpose. It invited me to translate, and to invite others to translate, your fine epitaph, which is also in the old Greek sense epigram. I was frightened, but thought I would ask of others what I dared not try. So I accumulated a little store, which I send.<sup>1</sup> They may shock, or may amuse you. *Generally* they are by men of good or more than good name in scholarship. I have however (after all my coy fears) tried my hand. It is right that I should say that the two last, notwithstanding their remarkable verbal coincidences, are distinct in authorship and date. Do not look at the list of names till you have performed the part of the Queen of Beauty, or of Rhadamanthus. Query, is it murder or only manslaughter?

With all kindest regards and remembrances,

Ever sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Do you and Mrs. T. never come so near the "White North" as this? The place is worth a look.

<sup>1</sup> The following were two of the best translations, the first by Edmund Lushington, the second by Canon David Melvill:

χαῖρ' ἀγαθὴ ψυχὴ· κρυφαῖς σέθεν ὀστέα βήσσαις  
κέῖται ἐν ἀρκτώαις, οὐδέ σε πατρίς ἔχει,  
ἤδη δ' ἔξανύεις σὺ μακάρτερά τέρμαθ' ὁδοῖο,  
οὐ χθονὸς ἀλλ' ἄστρον ἐς πῶλον οὐνέφελον.

σῶμα μὲν Ἀρκτῶαι νιφάδες λάχον· οὐρανὴν δὲ  
ἡμίθεος ψυχὴ στέλλεται εὐπλοῦτην.



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### No. 1

Non hic Nauta jaces fortissime. Contegit ossa  
Semper Hyperboreo candida terra gelu.  
Inde anima evehitur, cursu lætata secundo,  
Ardua, terrestrem non aditura polum.

MR. RICKARDS, Q.C.

### No. 2

οἴχεται· ἐν Βορέου νιφοέσσαῖς ὁστέα κεῖται  
ἄκταις· ναυτιλίαν Σὺ δὲ ναυτίλλει μέγ' ἀμείνω,  
Ἥρωος ψυχῇ, πόλον ἄμβροτον εἰσοιχνοῦσαν.

LORD LYTTTELTON.

### No. 3

Siste pedem : procul hinc albescunt ossa, sed Ille  
Navita fortis agit cursum trans sidera, longi  
Quò tandem detur metam tetigisse laboris.

BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

### No. 4

Non hic, sed Arcto membra sub albidâ ;  
Nauta ipse, et Heros lucida sidera  
Polumque cælestem requirit,  
Navigio potiore vectus.

W. E. G. (Nov. 12).

### No. 5

Non hic, sed niveâ requiescunt ossa sub Arcto ;  
Tuque, anima Herois pia Nautæ,  
Trajicis, usque Polum cui non terrestris origo,  
Navigio felicius, æquor.

LORD SELBORNE.

### No. 6

Non hic, sed niveâ jacent  
Arcti relliquiæ plagâ.  
Auris Ipse faventibus  
Heros Navitaque impiger  
Usque ad cæruleum bono  
Pergit navigio Polum.

W. E. G. (Nov. 16).

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My father writes to Gladstone :

I liked the Greek version best ; but then it is easier to translate into Greek than Latin, Greek being so much more flexible. No. 1 "terrestrem non aditura polum" hardly gives "toward no earthly pole," and in No. 5 "cui non terrestris origo" seems bald and feeble. No. 4 "lucida sidera" is *de trop.* Altogether after the Greek I like No. 6. He seems to be continuing his voyage from the end of the earth's axis, the earthly pole to the heavenly one, only "auris Ipse faventibus" should be with more favourable winds, happier ; and I doubt about "cæruleum." Might not our pole be called "cerulean" ? "Cælestem" (as in No. 4) would seem to be the word wanted. My neighbour, Mr. Prinsep, of the Indian Council, 83 years old, and as full of enthusiasm as a boy, but so blind he cannot write or read, spouted out to me yesterday morning a Persian translation of my epitaph.

---

*Summer tours that my father made with me,*

1874 to 1880

1874. Stratford on Avon.

1875. Pau and the Pyrenees.

1876. Battle Abbey, FitzGerald's at Woodbridge, and Hawarden.

1877. Canterbury with a view to "Becket" (Canon Robertson showed us everything connected with Becket, and we went carefully over the scene of the murder).

1878. Ireland, Westport (Lord Sligo's), Galway, Mount Trenchard (Lord Monteagle's), and the Shannon, Killarney, Dublin and Wicklow.

1879. Salisbury, Stonehenge and Amesbury.

1880. Dolomites, Venice, Verona and Lago di Garda.

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